



PARENTAL ANXIETY AND CHILD'S ILLNESS EXPERIENCE AS A FACTORS OF CHILD'S ANXIETY FORMATION

Irina Shishkova, Elena Pervichko, Julia Koniukhovskaia
Lomonosov Moscow State University,
Faculty of Psychology
Moscow, RUSSIA

Introduction

Important reasons for the development of child anxiety are the factor of parental anxiety and the experience of the children's illness. There are differences between the level of anxiety in frequently and rarely ill children, as well as these indicators in their parents. Personal anxiety is considered as an emotional reaction of expectation of danger from possible consequences of events, a premonition of possible failure, an imaginary threat.

Currently, most researchers consider health anxiety as a pathological condition that equates to hypochondria. However, Salkovskis & Rimes (1997) suggest that this condition can manifest in different degrees (from normal health concerns to clinical hypochondriac states) and is a continuum, the extreme form of which is hypochondria. In childhood, the development of such a personal trait as anxiety is primarily associated with the characteristics of the child's upbringing and the attitude of parents to a child. In families where there is a high level of anxiety of parents, there is increased anxiety in their children.

Research Objectives

To assess the relationship between parental anxiety and anxiety in frequently and rarely ill children.

Methods

State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (Spielberger, 1983), Short Health Anxiety Inventory (Salkovskis, 2002).

Sample

145 people:

46 frequently ill children (mean age – 16.3 ± 0.3),

41 rarely ill children (mean age – 16.1 ± 0.1),

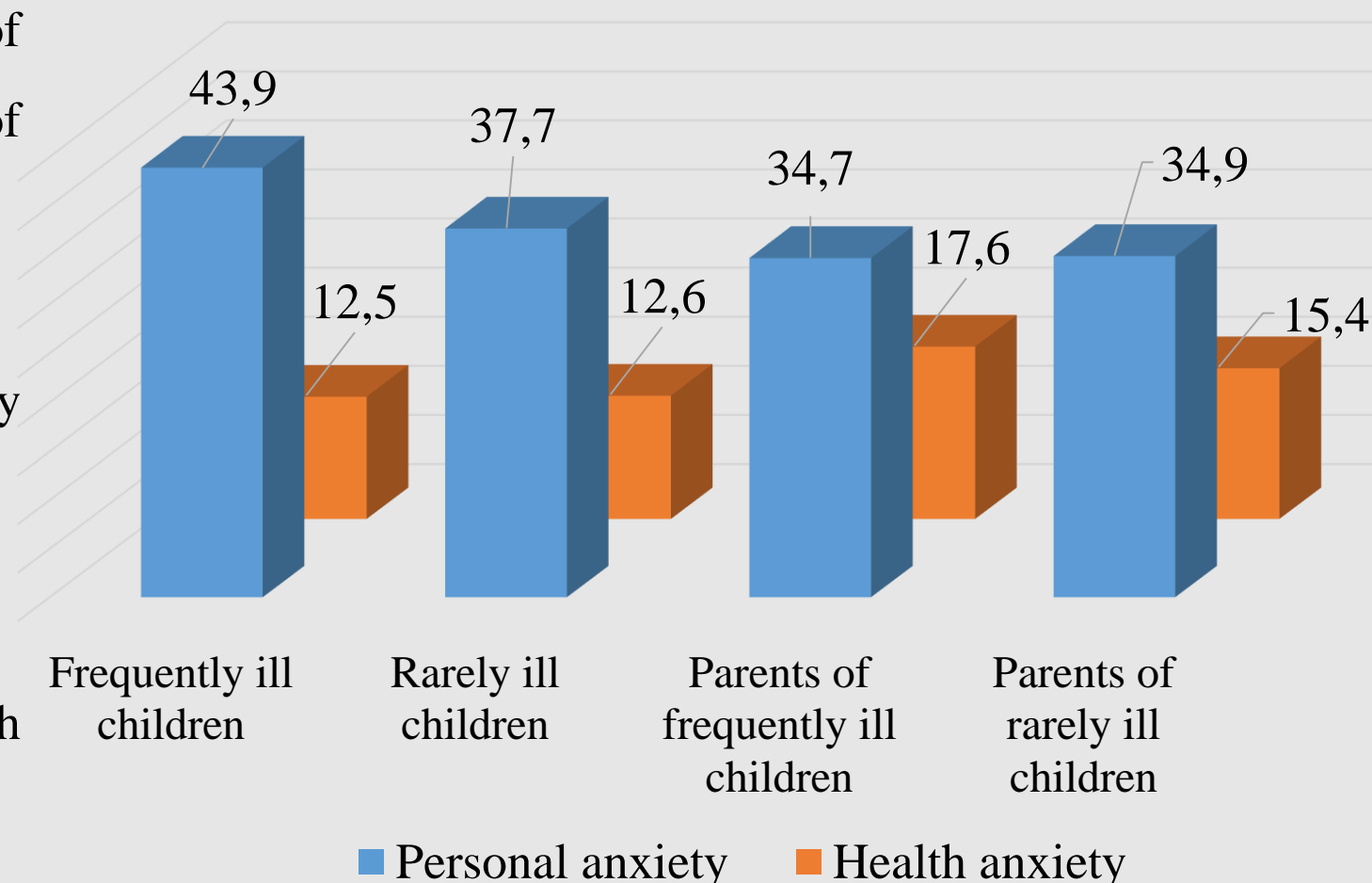
28 parents of frequently ill children (mean age – 44.9 ± 0.8),

30 parents of rarely ill children (mean age – 44.5 ± 1.5).

Results

Frequently ill children significantly differ from rarely ill children by personal anxiety parameter ($p = 1.386$, $p \leq 0.01$) and have no significant differences with this indicator in their parents ($p = 12.825$, $p > 0.05$). For rarely ill children and their parents this indicator has significant differences ($p = 2.382$, $p \leq 0.01$). Frequently ill children, like their parents, have a high level of personal anxiety, which may not always be correlated with the severity of the disease of children, but has an impact on their personal development. Health anxiety in frequently and rarely ill children has no significant differences ($p = 9.265$, $p > 0.05$). Illness experience doesn't affect health anxiety in this groups.

Anxiety parameters in children and their parents



Conclusion

Parental anxiety is defined as one of the significant components of adverse effects on the children's development. The psychological impact on the frequently ill anxious child will be more effective if the parental attitude to him is optimized. This problem requires a joint detailed study and the work of clinical psychologists and psychiatrists.