Volume : 2 | Issue : 12 | Dec 2013 • ISSN No 2277 - 8160

Research Paper | Education

The Determination of the Hyperactivity on Children with Divorced Parents in the District of Elbasan, Albania

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ABSTRACT

Unemployment and emigration are the main social factors which have strongly affected on the increase of the number of divorce these two last decades in Albania. The prefecture of Elbasan is one of the most affected by these phenomena, and therefore, divorce. In this scientific paper is analyzed the hyperactivity of 130 children divided in three groups of different ages. They are students from 8 to 18 years old who attend primary, secondary and high schools in the prefecture of Elbasan. Also, these 130 children were selected randomly among 600 children with divorced parents. The aim of this study is the identification of the hyperactivity level of these children. The study was carried out during the period from January to June 2012. The SDQ questionnaire (Goodman 1997), and the SPSS software package were used. Credibility of the hyperactivity scale, Cronbach's alpha resulted .733. In conclusion, these data show that some of these children reflect a significantly high level of the hyperactivity.

KEYWORDS : divorce, hyperactivity, SDQ questionnaire

Introduction

The number of divorced couples in Albania and especially in the prefecture of Elbasan has increased in these two last decades. This process is affected by many social economical factors such as unemployment, emigration, family planning, lifestyles and family structures. Also, the change of the law on divorce in Albania helps this process happen easier and quicker. Regarding the divorce there are many studies that show that the divorce rate is quite high in many Eastern countries (Hetherington & Stanley-Hagan, 1999).

According to some studies the family contexts can have profound effect on child development including various antisocial behaviors and hyperactivity, (Harper and McLanahan, 2004), (Wiesner and Windle, 2004). However, other studies prove that the wellbeing of children with divorced parents doesn't differ a lot from other children, whose parents aren't divorced (Amato, 1991), Hetherington and Stanley-Hagan, (1999).

Conflicts and aggravated relations between parents during the process of divorce lead to a certain family atmosphere, in which children feel stressed, sad and insecure.

During the post-divorce period either parent can feel stressed out, depressed, anxious or even become a drug or alcohol addict (Sanger et al.1992), (Walker et al. 1989), which then lead to psychological disorders in their children.

While other studies compare the behavior of children with divorced parents and children whose parents are not divorced, our study is focused on behavior problems and emotional disorders in children with divorced parents reported by children them-self who are compared to the data reported by their teachers and their parents.

Materials and Methods

The data collected in this study are based on The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire, SDQ, Goodman (1997). The questionnaire consists of 25 items which refer to different emotions and behaviors (emotional symptoms, hyperactivity, conduct problems, pro-social behavior and peer problems). This questionnaire was applied on 130 children who were randomly selected among 600 children with divorced parents from 8 to 18 years old. During this study these children were attending the middle schools of the prefecture of Elbasan. The hyperactivity data are given by the questions 2, 7, 15, 21 and 25 of the SDQ. Differences between groups were analyzed with t-test of ANOVAs. The statistical package "SPSS for Windows", release 20 was used for the analysis. The SDQ questionnaire was completed by children, parents and teachers, respectively.

Results and Discussions

The data presented in table 1 and figure 1 which are reported by the children themselves clearly show that the highest level of hyperactivity is reported by the children from 8 to ten years old while the lowest level is reported by children from 11 to 14 years old. According to some studies carried out in Eastern Europe, guardianship parents have the tendency to underestimate the clinical problems of their children, (Amato & Keith, 1991).

Table1. The hyperactivity level based on the data reported by the children, teachers and parents

Recording	Age of children interviewed	Number of children interviewed	Level 1 (normal) (5-8 points)	Level 2 (close to normal border) (9-11 points)	Level 3 (abnormal) (12-15 points)	Total
Children	8 – 10 years	22	36.4 %	27.2 %	36.4 %	100 %
	11 – 14 years	69	66.5 %	27.6 %	5.9 %	100 %
	15 – 18 years	39	64.1 %	28.2 %	7.7 %	100 %
Teachers	8 – 10 years	22	36.3 %	27.3 %	36.4 %	100 %
	11 – 14 years	69	46.4 %	29.1 %	14.5 %	100 %
	15 – 18 years	39	30.8 %	53.8 %	15.4 %	100 %
Parents	8 – 10 years	22	68.1 %	18.3 %	13.6 %	100 %
	11 – 14 years	69	55.1 %	37.6 %	7.3 %	100 %
	15 – 18 years	39	56.4 %	35.9 %	7.7 %	100 %

Figure1. Hyperactivity levels reported by the children themselves

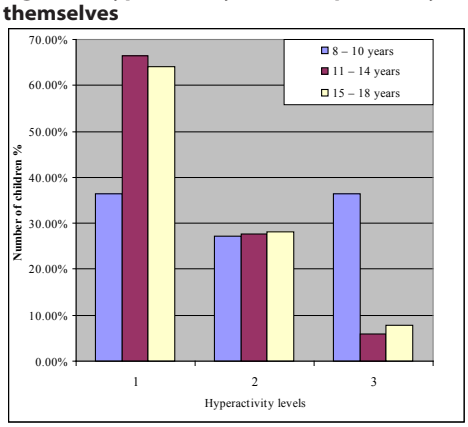
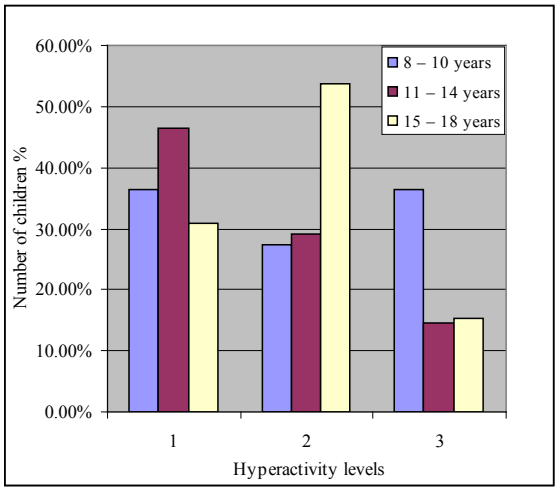
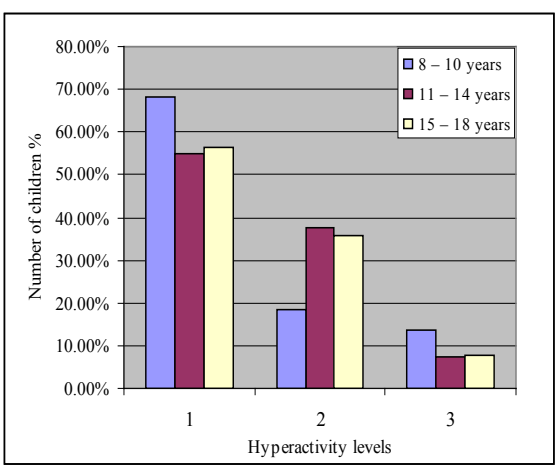


Figure 2. Hyperactivity levels reported by the teachers



Also the data which are presented in table 1 and figure 2 and figure 3 clearly show that teachers report the highest level of the hyperactivity of the children with divorced parents. Furthermore, the highest level of hyperactivity reported by children themselves, teachers and their parents belongs to the group of children from 8 to ten years old.

Figure 3. Hyperactivity levels reported by the parents



According to some studies carried out in Eastern Europe, guardianship parents have the tendency to underestimate the clinical problems of their children, (Amato & Keith, 1991). But according to a Chinese study the parents have the tendency to overestimate the hyperactivity problems of their children, (Liu 1999). The data reported by teachers and the parents are different because they are reported in a different context, (Najman et al 1997). According to other authors the teachers and the parents analyze children from different points of view, and have different relationships with them, (Santrock & Tracy 1978). Usually, parents are the best reporters about their children's behaviors, but parents and teens often complain about each-other's behavior problems, (Achenbach 1991).

The maintaining of communication between the psychologist, teachers, family and children is very important as well, (UNICEF 2006). The teachers, the psychologist and classmates can help children with a high level of hyperactivity in order to decrease its negative impact on their health. They can do that through teaching and games, (Bistamam & Nasser 2009).

Conclusions

The children with divorced parents show different level of hyperactivity.

The greatest number of children with divorced parents, with the highest hyperactivity level reported by children them selves, parents and teachers belongs to the children of an age from eight to ten years old.

The greatest number of the children with divorced parents which belongs to the highest hyperactivity level is reported by the teachers.

The lowest number of the children with divorced parents which belongs to the highest hyperactivity level is reported by the parents.

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