

Abstract

This study tests a cognitive model of coping strategies—the relationships among sense of coherence, parental attitudes and parenting stress—for caregiving parents of children with autism. One hundred and fifty-seven mothers of autistic children in Hong Kong recruited from representative parents' associations and community treatment centers completed the Chinese versions of Sense of Coherence Scale (SOC), Confidence and Acceptance subscales of Parent-Attitude Survey Scales, and Parenting Stress Index Short Form. Accounting for the mothers' demographic background, SOC showed a strong stress-moderating effect which was more prominent in mothers of children with more severe autistic symptoms than in mothers of children with less severe symptoms. Moreover, the attitudes of parental confidence and acceptance for the child were found to be mediators between SOC and stress. Clinical implications and future research directions are discussed.