

## Abstract

Parenting style and discipline practices are associated with both internalizing (INT) and externalizing (EXT) symptoms, but whether particular practices exert diffuse (across symptom) or symptom specific influences is unknown. This longitudinal study examined concurrent parenting associations with these symptoms across gender. Results indicate that maternal warmth was protective against female INT symptoms across development, and both symptoms in males at age 10. Furthermore, use of scolding was protective for INT symptoms in both males and females. Use of induction was associated with decreased EXT symptoms at age 6 for females only. Lastly, physical punishment showed differential effects on males and female INT symptoms. These results indicate that parenting has age, gender, and symptom specific effects.

## Background Research

- Parenting is associated with protective (e.g., warmth and inductive discipline) and negative influences (e.g., harsh punishment) on INT and EXT (e.g., Gershoff, 2002; Hughes & Gullone, 2008).
- But which parenting practices have diffuse (across both symptom domains) or specific effects (only one symptom domain)? (Caron, Weiss, Harris & Catron, 2006).
- Furthermore, how this is influenced by age and gender of the child?

### Hypotheses:

1. Warmth is negatively related to both symptom types and gender
2. Scolding is positively related to INT across gender.
3. Induction is negatively related to EXT symptoms across gender.
4. Physical punishment is positively related to male INT and EXT.

## Methods

**Participants:** 227 children assessed longitudinally at age 3, 6, & 10.

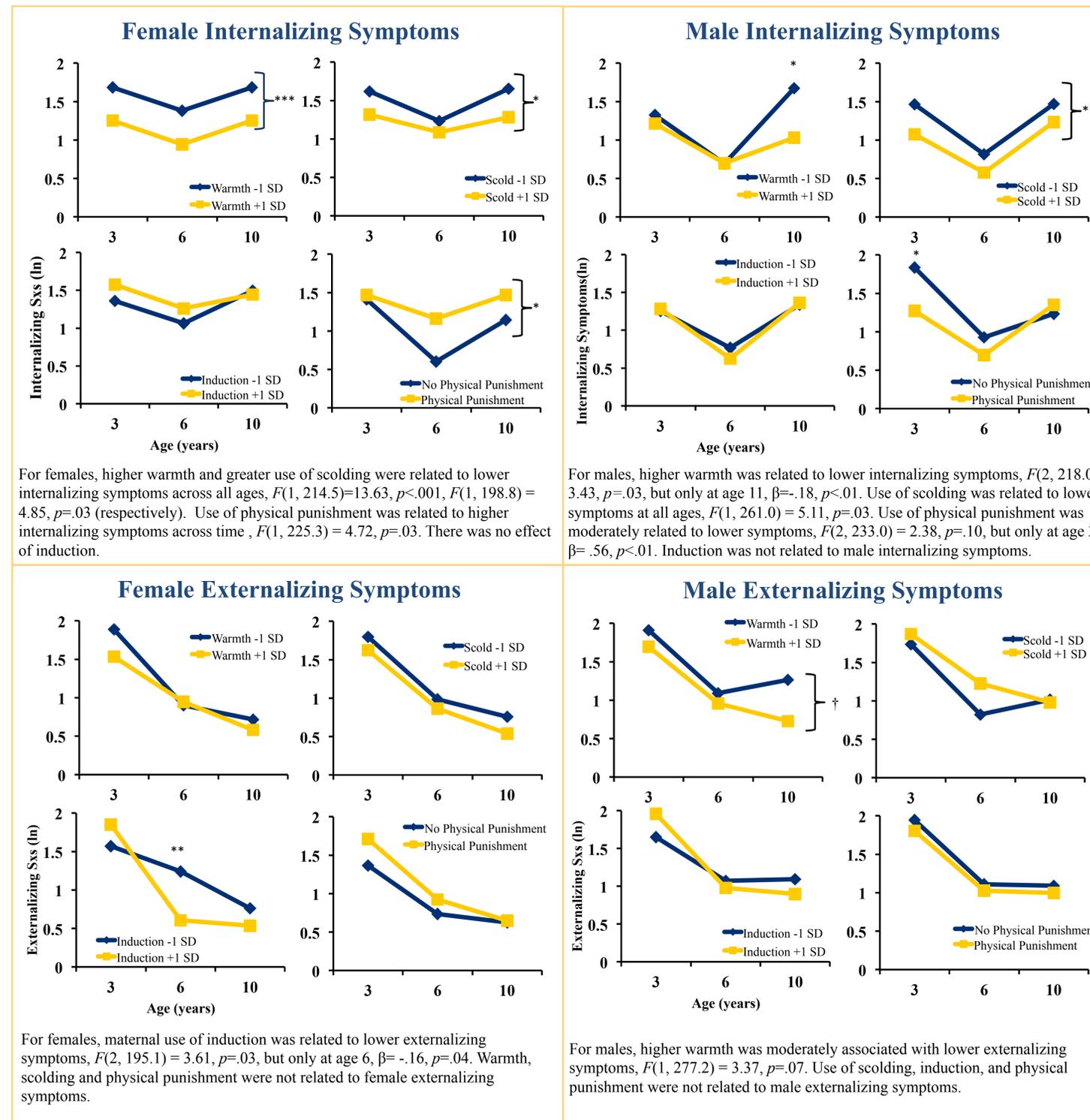
### Measures:

- **Parenting Dimensions Inventory** (Power, 1993) – maternal report
  - Warmth – nurturance and responsiveness
  - Scolding – use of scolding during discipline
  - Induction – reasoning and reminding of rules during discipline
  - Physical Punishment- use of hitting or spanking for discipline
- **Teacher Report Form** (Achenbach, 1991): teacher report of internalizing and externalizing symptoms at ages 3, 6, and 10.

### Data Analysis:

- Random effects mixed model analysis.
- Separate models were run for males and females.
- **Dependent variables:** Symptoms at ages 3, 6, and 10
- **Independent variables:** Parenting at ages 3, 6, and 10.
- Time defined as a categorical variable.
- Analyses were split into high and low parenting (+1 SD and -1 SD, respectively) in post hoc analyses

## Results



## Results continued

| Descriptives                                  | Time 1     | Time 2     | Time 3     |
|---|------------|------------|------------|
| Number of participants                        | 186        | 177        | 172        |
| Age in years                                  | 3.45 (.17) | 5.73 (.29) | 10.5 (.04) |
| Gender (% female)                             | 48%        | 46%        | 48%        |
| Internalizing symptoms (ln)                   | 1.48 (.07) | .82 (.06)  | 1.23 (.08) |
| Externalizing symptoms (ln)                   | 1.70 (.09) | .97 (.08)  | .84 (.08)  |
| Maternal Warmth (centered)                    | .09 (.12)  | -.02 (.13) | .02 (.13)  |
| Scold   | 1.11 (.04) | 1.13 (.04) | 1.22 (.04) |
| Induction (centered)                          | -.02 (.13) | 0 (.14)    | .03 (.14)  |
| Physical Punishment <sup>a</sup> (% endorsed) | 48%        | 38%        | 22%        |

<sup>a</sup>Physical punishment was dichotomized based on endorsement of use (none versus more than once)  
<sup>b</sup>Standard Error presented in parentheses

## Discussion

### Warmth:

- Results were consistent with previous literature (e.g., McKee et al., 2007), that found that higher warmth was protective against both behavioral and emotional symptoms.

### Scolding:

- Results were not in the direction of our expectations, which may be due to how the term “scolding” was interpreted.
- Scolding and physical punishment were offered as alternatives to the same question; it may be that parents picked the least controversial option, artificially producing the protective effect for scolding

### Induction:

- Results were consistent with the theory that induction is most important for middle childhood (Blum et al., 1995) and EXT symptoms.
- Surprisingly, there were no associations with boys, although the literature suggests it may be used more frequently with females (Smetana, 1989).

### Physical Punishment

- Unexpectedly, physical punishment was not associated with EXT symptoms (Gershoff, 2002), but was with INT.
- Potentially, mothers may be less likely to use physical discipline with boys who show higher INT symptoms and girls may be more sensitive to physical punishment, leading to increased INT.

### Limitations:

- Did not examine possible interactions of style and discipline, although analyses controlled for other parenting variables.
- Physical punishment had low occurrence in the sample, thus results may be interpreted as a lack of physical punishment.

### Conclusion:

- Replicating results such as these may have important implications for tailoring targets of treatments dependent on age, gender, and presenting problems of children.

### References:

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