

The role of individual factors and family functioning in the development of emotional-behavioural problems during the adolescence

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The present cross-sectional study aimed at investigating the joint role of variables linked to individual functioning (emotion regulation and theory of mind) and family functioning in the development of emotional-behavioural problems during adolescence. A sample of 108 participants between 12 and 18 years old and their parents completed a battery of questionnaires including the *Emotion Regulation Questionnaire* (ERQ), the *Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale* (DERS), the *Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scales* (FACES IV) and the *Child Behavior Checklist/6-18* (CBCL/6-18). In addition, adolescents were administered the *Reading the Mind in the Eye Test*, a task assessing affective Theory of Mind (ToM) - i.e., the ability to infer others' emotions. Data were analyzed with multivariate statistical techniques, including regressions and path analyses. The results suggested several interesting conclusions. First, the use of an expressive suppression strategy was positively correlated with non acceptance of emotional responses, limited access to emotion regulation strategies and lack of emotional clarity. Second, the use of cognitive reappraisal was positively correlated (and the use of expressive suppression negatively correlated) with high scores of family cohesion, flexibility and communication. Third, adolescents who rated their families' structures as highly disengaged, enmeshed or chaotic had lower scores in the affective ToM task and were reported to have more externalizing problems. We also report the preliminary results of a short-time intervention aimed at increasing the emotional skills of a subsample of adolescents through their participation to a series of online workshops on the regulation of negative emotions.