



The Association Between Parental Care and Levels of Romantic Expression

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Introduction

- ❖ Research shows that the negative romantic relationships parents have with each other affect rates of child maltreatment, which subsequently affects their child's future romantic relationships (T. R. Adams et al., 2019).
- ❖ There is some degree of influence between the relations a parent has with their child and the subsequent quality of the child's romantic relationships.
- ❖ Within a longitudinal study conducted in Germany, it was found that the negative conflict with both mother and father is an indicator of negative conflict with the partner (S. Walper et al., 2015).
- ❖ While a degree of influence between the relations a parent has with their child and the subsequent quality of the child's romantic relationships has been found, the sample sizes are rather small.
- ❖ Another study that found adolescent affect, which was affected by parental attitudes and behaviors, had a direct relation to romantic development over time had only 166 participants (Kansky, J. et al., 2019).

Research Questions

- ❖ Is parental care associated with higher levels of expression in ideal romantic relationships?
- ❖ Does the association between parental care and levels of expression differ between sex?

Methods

Sample

- ❖ Respondents (n=6504) were drawn from Wave 1 of the The US National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health (AddHealth).
- ❖ AddHealth Wave 1 is a nationally representative sample of adolescents from grades 7-12 in the United States who were interviewed during the 1994-95 school year, as well as April through December of 1995.

Measures

- ❖ Data was drawn from adolescents (grades 7-12) who were asked to rate how much they believed their mother or father cared for them. Each response was coded from 1-5 for maternal and fatherly care and then summed. Scores ranged from 0(neither care) to 2(both care).
- ❖ Adolescents were given 17 different scenarios and for each scenario, asked if in their ideal relationship, they would want that scenario to happen. Only most common answers (11) were used. Answers of yes (1) and no (0) were summed and then split into a range of 1(low)-3(high).

Results

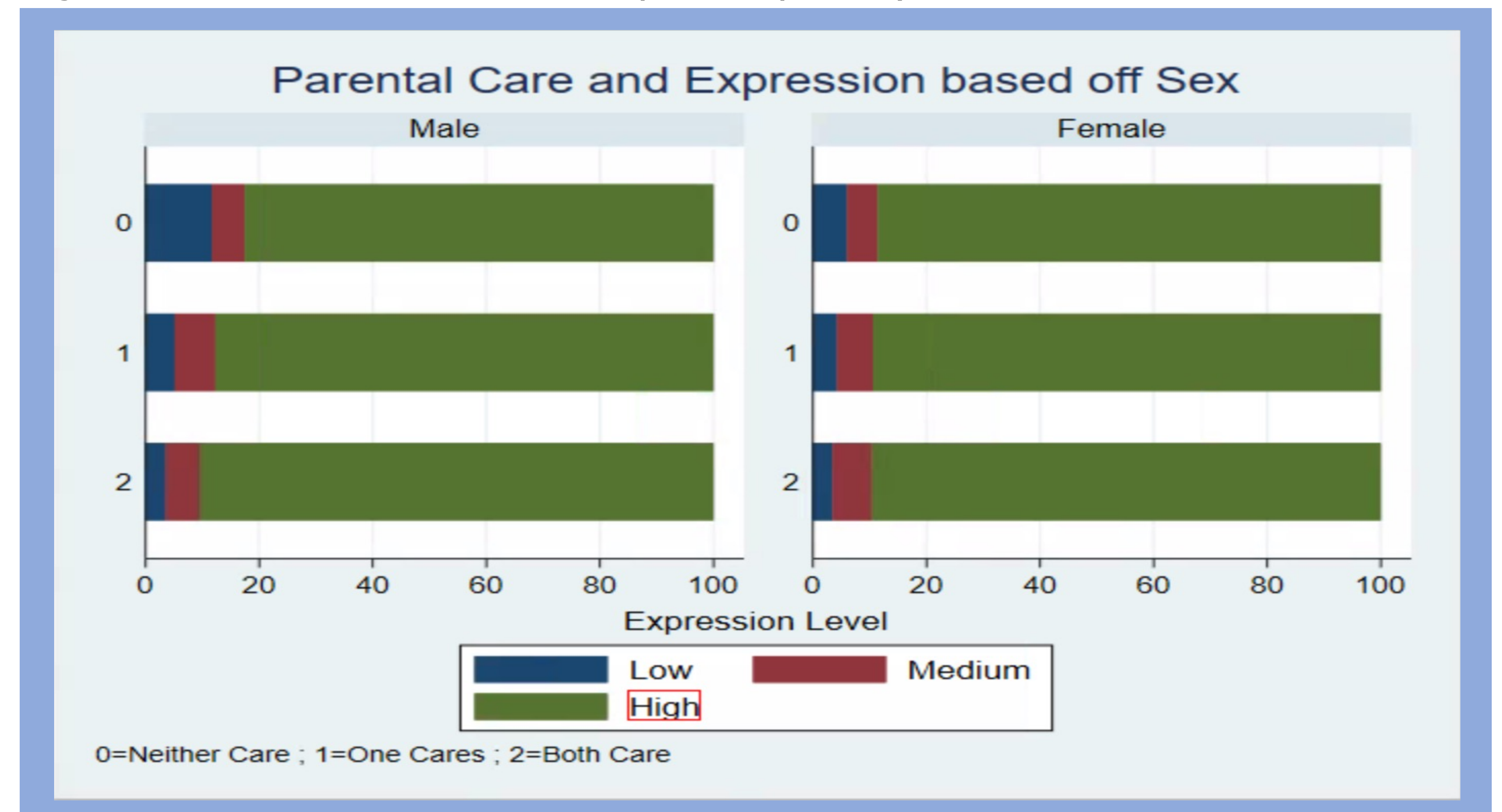
Univariate

- ❖ 34.32% of adolescents believed one parent cared about them. 4.15% of adolescents believed neither cared for them.
- ❖ 89.39% of adolescents had high levels of expression in ideal romantic relationships.

Bivariate

- ❖ Chi-square analysis showed that **among adolescents, those with higher levels of expression within ideal romantic relationships had typically believed both parents cared for them** (61.99%) versus those with the same levels of romantic ideals but did not believe their parents cared for them (3.99%), $X^2=18.9957$, $p=0.001$
- ❖ Additional post-hoc analysis shows that there was **not** a significant difference between those who believed at least one parent cared about them and those who believed both parents cared for about them. ($p=0.073$). (Figure 2)

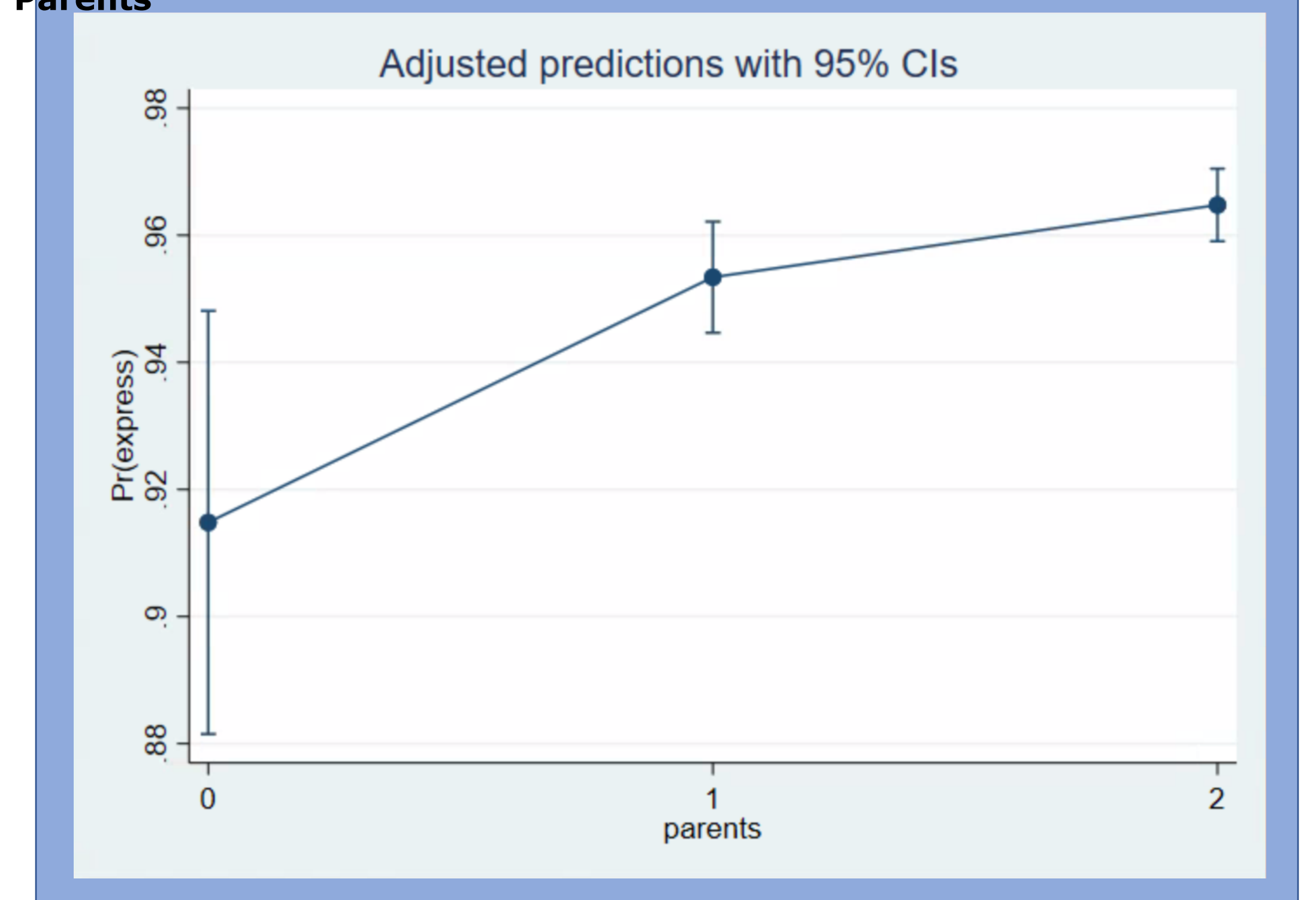
Figure 1. Parental Care and Levels of Romantic Expression Separated by Sex.



Multivariate

- ❖ Sex was found to be **neither a confounder nor moderator**. Parental care and levels of expression were found to still be associated at similar levels after controlling for sex.
- ❖ Sex was found to be **positively, but not significantly associated** with levels of expression in ideal romantic relationships. (p -value>0.24) as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 2. Margins Plot Describing Probability of Expression Level Across Parents



Discussion

- ❖ Those who believe both their parents care about them may have higher levels of romantic expression than those who believe neither care.
- ❖ Individuals who believe at least one parent care about them may have similar levels of expressions to that of those who believe both their parents care about them.
- ❖ One limitation of this study is that some of sub-sample sizes (the levels within variables) had fewer respondents ($n<300$) compared to others($n>2000$) potentially leading to skewed results.
- ❖ Another limitation is that the original interview questions may not encapsulate other modes of expression within ideal romantic relationships.
- ❖ Further research is needed to determine whether parental treatment may affect the adolescents' romantic relationships with possible covariates such as socioeconomic status and presence of psychiatric disorders within the adolescent.