

Family functioning and psychological well-being among parents and adolescents in new immigrant families in Israel

Maya Benish-Weisman¹, Tania Konshina¹, Einat Elizarov²

Saskia R. Vos³, Tae Kyoung Lee³, Seth J. Schwartz⁴

1. Paul Baerwald School of Social Work and Social Welfare, Hebrew University Jerusalem, Jerusalem, Israel.
2. Faculty of Education, The University of Haifa, Haifa, Israel
3. Public Health Sciences, University of Miami, Miami, FL, USA.
4. Educational Psychology, University of Texas, Austin, TX, USA.

Thematic importance: The study examined the association between family functioning profiles and parents' and adolescents' well-being among immigrant families from the FSU in Israel.

Introduction and objectives: Adolescence is a crucial period of physical, intellectual, personality, and social developmental changes, affecting relationships and well-being (Collins & Steinberg, 2006). Family members must adapt to the adolescent's rapidly increasing autonomy and independence, which may temporarily impact family functioning (De Goede et al., 2009). Early and middle adolescence may be characterized by increased family conflict and decreased family closeness (Mastrotheodoros et al., 2020) as family relationships become more interdependent, equal, and reciprocal. Family functioning affects a wide range of family members' well-being indicators. Functional family systems are characterized by open communication, cohesion, and flexibility, and they provide children with a safe, nurturing environment that fulfills their needs (Walsh, 2015). In contrast, dysfunctional family systems may be inflexible, distant, and unsupportive; they may inhibit adolescents' and also to their parents' healthy psychosocial development (Mastrotheodoros et al, 2020). We hypothesized: (1) high family functioning profile would relate to high well-being of both parents and adolescents; (2) low family functioning profile would relate to low well-being of both parents and adolescents.

Method: The study included a sample of 160 FSU immigrant families (parents and adolescents aged 12-15) in Israel. All participating families had migrated from a former Soviet country (Russia, Ukraine, or Belarus) to Israel during the 5 years prior to assessment. One parent and one adolescent from each family completed the questionnaires online after a personal telephone talk with a research team member. *Family functioning* was measured by four indicators: parent-adolescent communication, parental involvement, positive parenting, and family conflict. *Well-being* was measured by four indicators: self-esteem, optimism, anxiety, and depression.

Results: To identify the distinct profiles of family functioning, we used latent profile analysis (LPA) (Muthén, 2004). The four-profile model proved to be the optimal profile solution for family functioning. Levels of psychological distresses (depressive symptoms and anxiety) of parents varied across four profiles. For example, parents in the *low family functioning* group reported higher levels of depressive symptoms than those in the *high family functioning of parents and low family functioning of adolescents* (wald-chi square value = 4.26, $p < .05$) and the *high family functioning* groups (wald-chi square value = 5.185, $p < .05$). We found mean differences in adolescents' psychological resources (self-esteem and optimism) across four profiles. For example, adolescents in the *overall high family functioning* group reported higher self-esteem than those in the *overall low family functioning* (wald-chi square value = 13.06, $p < .001$). Further, adolescents in the *overall high family functioning* group reported higher self-esteem than those in the *high family functioning of parents and low family functioning of adolescents* (wald-chi square value = 13.56, $p < .001$) group.

Conclusions and implications: The results highlight the importance of family functioning as perceived by parents and adolescents to the well-being of both. Future studies should examine these relations longitudinally to tap into the directivity of the effect.