

TALK

EXAMINING PARENTAL INVESTMENT DYNAMICS IN TWIN FAMILIES: INSIGHTS FROM A TRIADIC EXPERIMENTAL TASK

Isabella Ferreira*, Flavia Ito, Briseida Resende, Emma Otta

Department of Experimental Psychology, Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil

*isabella.ferreira@usp.br

ABSTRACT

We aim to investigate differential parental treatment (DPT) in families with twins aged 7-14 years. A Triadic Experimental Task was created to simulate everyday situations in which twins sit side by side, each one with a puzzle in front of them, and mother/father stays between the twins and can choose to help them or not. A total of 180 seconds out of 10 minutes of recorded interaction were analyzed. The interobserver reliability was above 0.9. Parental treatment for each twin was assessed by combining the durations of the behavioral categories “observation without interference”, “interference with the puzzle”, and “oral communication” and DPT score was calculated by subtracting the parental treatment for twins 1 and 2. In these preliminary interpair analyses with 7 monozygotic (MZ), 5 dizygotic of same-sex (DZSS) and 4 dizygotic of opposite-sex (DZOP) pairs, we tested the hypothesis that zygosity and sex predict DPT. No significant DPT differences were observed among the groups ($U = 1,497$, $p = 0,473$). We also performed an exploratory analysis with 5 triads to examine DPT in twins with dissimilar health conditions. There is a favoritism towards the more vulnerable twin ($T = -2,02$, $p = 0,04$), which can be explained by the Contingent Model of Parental Investment. The study of twin families provides an opportunity to explore the nuances of parental investment and can contribute to parental practices and child development. Further analyses will be conducted with a larger sample and taking into account other variables such as children's birth weight and parents' socioeconomic status.