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## Psychiatric adolescents in residential-care: The role of attachment and emotional regulation strategies on psychopathological symptoms

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Attachment and emotional regulation [ER] strategies cognitive reappraisal [CR] and expressive suppression [ES] can be protective or risk factors for psychopathological symptoms, also interacting with each other. Children in residential-care [RC], due to their previous negative experiences showed difficulties in the development of secure attachments and adaptive ER strategies, as CR. This is the preliminary report of a larger pilot study aimed to investigating the associations between attachment, ER strategies and psychopathological symptoms in 12 adolescents with psychiatric diagnoses (aged 15-18, M=16.92, DS=1.08; 50% males), placed in residential-care [RC]. We used: the youth self-report 11/18 (YSR 11/18) to measure the levels of internalizing and externalizing problems; the emotional regulation questionnaire for children-adolescents (ERQCA) to assess ER strategies and the inventory of parent and peer attachment (IPPA) to assess attachment patterns. Main results showed that internalizing symptoms were negatively related to attachment to mother ( $\rho = -.740$ ,  $p = .009$ ) and CR ( $\rho = -.596$ ,  $p = .041$ ) but positively with ES ( $\rho = .616$ ,  $p = .033$ ), which was also related with delinquency ( $\rho = .618$ ,  $p = .032$ ) and thought problems ( $\rho = .765$ ,  $p = .004$ ). CR also showed positive associations with attachment to mother ( $\rho = .838$ ,  $p = .001$ ), father ( $\rho = .833$ ,  $p = .005$ ) and peers ( $\rho = .679$ ,  $p = .022$ ). No correlations were found with total score of externalizing symptoms ( $p\text{-value} > .102$ ). A stepwise multiple regression on internalizing symptoms only acknowledged the contribution of attachment to mother (adjusted  $R^2 = .455$ ,  $p = .028$ ). These results suggest further investigations on attachment to mother and ER strategies, especially CR, which could be related to the symptoms of psychiatric adolescents.

### Biography

Muzi Stefania is a Psychologist and PhD student at DISFOR, University of Genoa: the Research Project investigates the role of emotional regulation, alexithymia and attachment in at-risk teenagers.

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