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Recent Research Abstracts

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EFFECTS OF RELATIONSHIP DISCORD

Whisman, Mark A; Uebelacker, Lisa A. (2006). Impairment and distress associated with relationship discord in a national sample of married and cohabiting adults. *Journal of Family Psychology*. 20 (3), 369-377.

The clinical importance of relationship discord was examined through evaluating the association between relationship discord and multiple measures of impairment and psychological distress in a population-based sample of married and cohabiting adults (N = 2,677). In comparison to people that were not in discordant relationships, individuals in discordant relationships reported greater social role impairment with relatives and friends and greater work role impairment. They also reported higher levels of general distress and poorer perceived health and were more likely to report suicide ideation. With the exception of suicide ideation, the associations between relationship discord and impairment and psychological distress remained significant when controlling for current mood, anxiety, and substance use disorders, suggesting that relationship discord is incrementally related to impairment and psychological distress over and above the effects of psychiatric disorders.

Amato, Paul R & Afifi, Tamara D. (2006). Feeling caught between parents: Adult children's relations with parents and subjective wellbeing. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 68 (1), 222-235.

Research on divorce has found that adolescents' feelings of being caught between parents are linked to internalising problems and weak parent-child relationships. The present study estimates the effects of marital discord, as well as divorce, on young adult offspring's feelings of being caught in the middle (N = 632). Children with parents in high-conflict marriages were more likely than other children to feel caught between parents. These feelings were associated with lower subjective wellbeing and poorer quality parent-child relationships. Offspring with divorced parents were no more likely than offspring with continuously married parents in low-conflict relationships to report feeling caught. Feelings of being caught appeared to fade in the decade following parental divorce. These results suggest that, unlike children of divorce, children with parents in conflicted marriages (who do not divorce) may be unable to escape from their parents' marital problems-even into adulthood.

Beach, Steven, R. H; Katz, J; Sooyeon, K; Brody, Gene H. (2003). Prospective effects of marital satisfaction on depressive symptoms in established marriages: A dyadic model. *Journal of Social & Personal Relationships*, 20 (3), 355.

In this research, potential sex-related differences in the prospective effect of marital discord on depression were explored. The associations between one spouse's marital discord and his or her partner's later levels of depressive symptoms were also examined. Spouses from randomly sampled married couples (N = 166) with adolescent children provided reports of their marital quality and depressive symptoms at baseline and one year later. Results revealed that Time 1 marital quality was associated with Time 2 depressive symptoms, the magnitude of this effect was similar for both husbands and wives, and spouses' own marital quality at Time 1 predicted their partners' Time 2 depressive symptoms net of other predictors in the model.