

Transitions in Sense of Coherence among Middle-Aged Women with Adolescents before and after the onset of COVID-19 Pandemic

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Background

COVID-19 caused significant stress in Japanese society, especially among women. Yet, causes of the stress remain unclear.

Aim of the study

Sense of Coherence (SOC) is used to measure a coping ability of people to deal with stress successfully. We investigated changes in SOC before and during the pandemic among middle-aged Japanese women raising adolescents.

Methods

The subjects were 166 mothers of adolescents (12-15 years) and their children in pairs. The first survey was conducted in the spring of 2019 (pre-pandemic), followed by the second survey (anonymous self-administered questionnaire) in July-September 2020. The significance level was set at 0.1 for this exploratory analysis.

Results and implications

Eighty-eight mothers (53%) increased or maintained their SOC after the pandemic (Group1), and 78 mothers (47%) decreased their SOC during the pandemic (Group2). The results of the comparison between the two groups (T-test) showed that there were no differences in the children's personality traits, sense of place at school, and family relationships. However, mothers in Group 2 tended to be more worried about the cost of their children's education before the pandemic ($p=0.072$) and had found new jobs during the pandemic ($p=0.092$).

Also, children of Group2 experienced more academic difficulties during the pandemic ($p=0.014$), especially experiencing lack of understanding from their teachers ($p=0.023$). Children's study delays and troubles at school due to the pandemic may have some impact on mothers' SOC. The mothers may have started a new job due to economic deprivation and a need for social and economic support.