

Why some fathers feel parenting is “cool”: a cross-sectional study

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Aim of the study

The study sought to clarify the parenting status and factors leading to fathers' characterizing parenting as “cool”.

Methods

This was a cross-sectional study. For fathers of infants scheduled for their 4-month health checkups, between October 2017 and March 2018, completed questionnaires were collected during the checkups, with 518 responses received (response rate: 54.8%). Items included were basic information (19 items) and parenting information (4 items). The present study was approved by the Ethics Committee of Fukushima Medical University (No. 29085).

Results

Of 502 participants, 364 (72.5%) of them were fathers and 309 (61.6%) were mothers, aged 30 years or older. 263 (52.4%) were first-time mothers and 414 (82.5%) were nuclear families. Asked "Do you think men who take care of children are cool?", the relationship between those men who disagree and the background factors of father's age over 30 years, and poor mental condition were, respectively, (adjusted odds ratio: 1.77, 95% C.I. 1.08-2.90) and (adjusted odds ratio: 1.59, 95% C.I. 1.01-2.49). Men who disagreed with the question v. child-rearing status, those who avoid child-rearing ($p=0.02$), and those avoiding parenting in Fukushima City ($p=0.03$) were higher.

Conclusions and implications

In this study, 28.1% of fathers did not feel it is cool to be a man who takes care of children. Clearly, for them, child-rearing is undesirable. The results suggest that the age and mental health of fathers should be considered to promote the positive image and performance of parenting.