

EMOTIONAL, BEHAVIORAL AND SOCIAL FUNCTIONING IN CHILDREN OF PARENTS WITH ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS: A CASE-CONTROL STUDY**Başak Güldür¹, Başak Bağcı¹, Aslı Tuğba Esen¹, Canem Kavurma², Ercan Durmaz¹**¹*Department of Psychiatry, İzmir Katip Çelebi University Atatürk Training and Research Hospital, İzmir, Türkiye*²*Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Dr. Behçet Uz Pediatric Diseases And Surgery Training and Research Hospital, İzmir, Türkiye*

BACKGROUND AND AIM: Parental alcohol and substance use disorders (AUD/SUD) can impair parental capacity and lead to emotional and behavioral difficulties. This study compared emotional-behavioral problems and social skills in children of parents with AUD and SUD versus healthy controls.

METHODS: This study included parents with AUD or SUD attending the AMATEM clinic of İzmir Katip Çelebi University Atatürk Training and Research Hospital and their children aged 4-15 years and matched healthy controls. Sociodemographic data were collected from children and parents. Parents completed the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) and the SOBECE (Social Skills Assessment Scale) for their children. Ethical approval was obtained (2024-SAEK-0017)

RESULTS: Ninety children (mean age 9.31 ± 3.62 years) were categorized into three groups ($n = 30$ each): children of parents with AUD, SUD, and healthy controls.

Significant intergroup differences were found in SDQ hyperactivity ($\chi^2 = 9.10$, $p = 0.011$), peer problems ($\chi^2 = 10.29$,

$p = 0.006$) and total SDQ scores ($\chi^2 = 6.87$, $p = 0.032$), with higher scores in the SUD group compared to healthy controls. Significant differences were also observed in SOBECE total scale scores ($\chi^2 = 12.80$, $p = 0.002$) and subscales, including assertiveness ($\chi^2 = 7.16$, $p = 0.028$), problem solving ($\chi^2 = 6.67$, $p = 0.036$), planning ($\chi^2 = 7.05$, $p = 0.029$), group interaction and task management ($\chi^2 = 16.65$, $p < 0.001$), and coping with aggression and impulses ($\chi^2 = 14.72$, $p < 0.001$). The SUD group scored lower across all SOBECE domains than healthy controls.

CONCLUSIONS: Children of parents with SUD demonstrate greater emotional-behavioral difficulties and poorer social skills than healthy controls. Our findings highlight the need for routine mental health screening in children of parents receiving treatment for use disorders. Early intervention strategies such as parenting support, resilience-building, and school-based interventions may improve long-term developmental outcomes.

Keywords: Alcohol and Substance Use Disorders, Social Skills, Children, Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire, Parental Addiction