

# Child-parent relations in families with a seriously ill child

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## Introduction

The serious disease of a child is a hard experience for a family. Such families are likely to have the common problems that negatively affect the family well-being. These are emotional and functional difficulties of family members that tend to distract their life aspects such as work, leisure, family roles, and relationship. It is often a cause of social interaction problems and a short of family budget because of high cost of child's medical care. Such tend to go through psychological problems that requires help from professional psychologists. The effectiveness of the aid depends on the understanding of child-parent relations, in particular, in families with a child having acute lymphoblastic leukemia.

## Methods

The research is based on two groups of methods:

- The first group of research addressed to parents to explore their parental vision of "child-parent relations". These were made up of PARI (parental attitude research instrument) method and E. G. Eidemuller's questionnaire of "Analysis of family relations" (AFR);
- The second group was used to study "child-parent relations" from a child vision. The methods exploited include LeTest-Film by Rene' Gille and "Kinetic family drawings" by Burns R., and Kaufman S. (KFD).

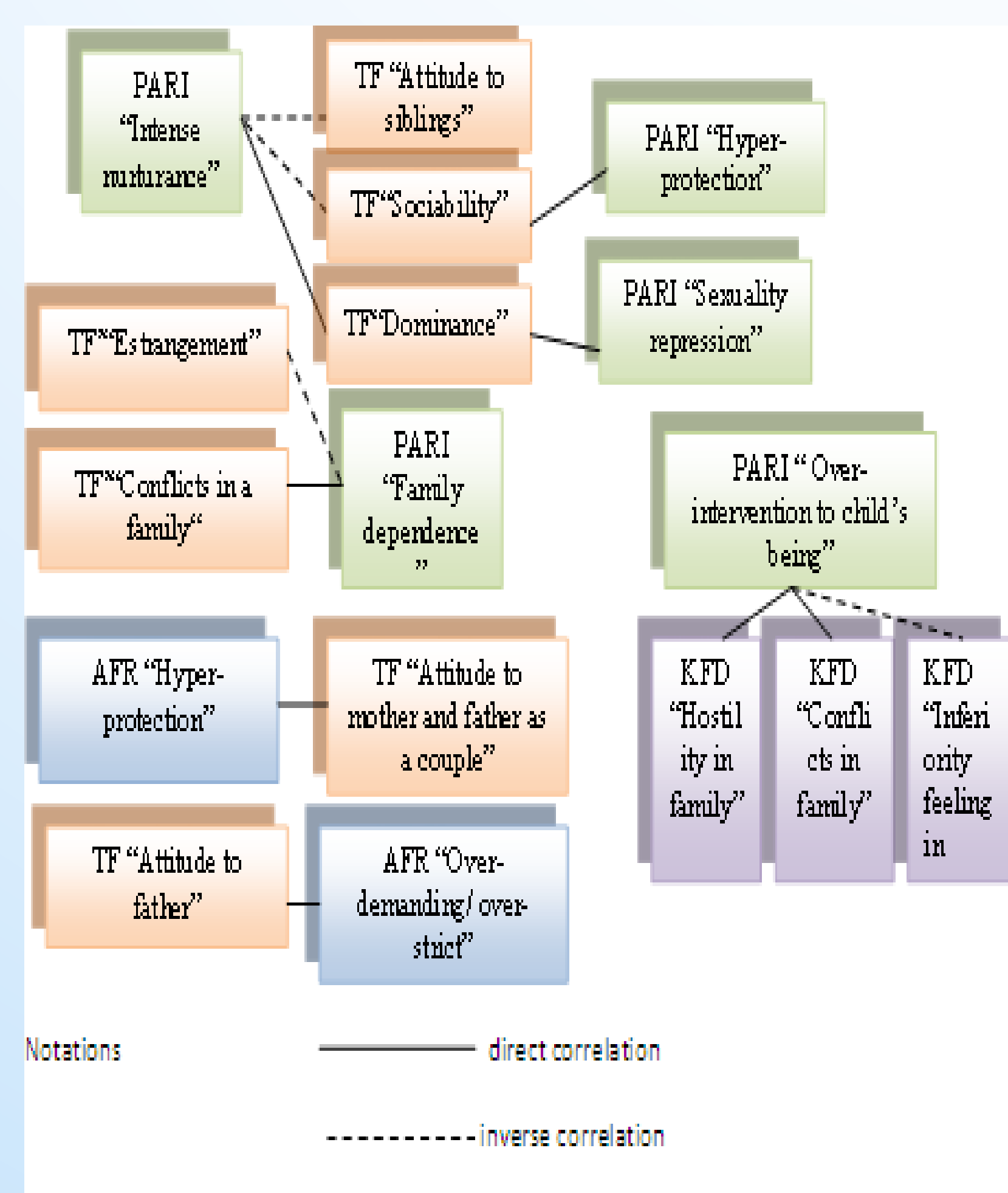
## The purpose of the research

- To study types of family education and to identify wrong child guidance that triggers child's pathologic changes;
- To identify structure and roles of a family lifestyle and life activities that demonstrate characteristics of family interactions and mechanisms of family integration;
- To understand a child's attitude to his/her family, his/her place in the family, and relationship the child's with the family members and other people around.

## Subjects

The research aimed to study a group of pre-school children at the age of 5-6, that were diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukemia and their mothers. Overall 25 families participated in the research.

## Results



## Discussions

Correlational analysis identified the correlations of researched variables in parent and children testing. Qualitative correlations were assessed with Spearman rank correlation coefficient (r). The highest number of significant links identified by PARI is correlated to the child's analysis by Rene' Gille's LeTest-Film (TF). PARI factor of "Intense nurturance" shows inverse relationship towards the factors of "Attitude to siblings" and "Sociability" ( $r = -0,40$ ;  $p < 0,05$ ) and direct relationship to the "Dominance" factor ( $r = 0,44$ ,  $p < 0,05$ ).

PARI's indicator of "Family dependence" has the inverse relationship to TF's "Estrangement" ( $r = -0,44$ ;  $p < 0,05$ ) and direct correlation to the factor of "Conflicts in a family" ( $r = 0,43$ ;  $p < 0,05$ ).

The AFR factor of "Hyper-protection" is directly correlated to TF's factor of "Attitude to mother and father as a couple" ( $r = 0,42$ ;  $p < 0,05$ ). TF's factor of "Attitude to father" ( $r = 0,40$ ;  $p < 0,05$ ) is directly linked to AFR factor of "Over-demanding/over-strict".

PARI factors of "Husband's detachment" and "Sexuality repression" have strong direct correlations to TF "Dominance" and "Sociability" ( $r = 0,73$  and  $r = 0,65$ ;  $p < 0,05$ ), ( $r = 0,61$  and  $r = 0,57$ ;  $p < 0,05$ ).

The indicator of "Over-intervention to child's being" (PARI) is directly correlated to KFD "Conflicts in family" and "Hostility in family" ( $r = 0,49$  и  $r = 0,46$ ;  $p < 0,05$ ) and inversely correlated to the factor of "Inferiority feeling in family" ( $r = -0,41$ ;  $p < 0,05$ ).

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## Conclusion

•Correlational analysis of the tested factors showed that the more care mothers give to their seriously ill child, the less demand to sociability the child tends to show; it goes along with the negative attitude that he/she tends to reveal to his/her siblings.

•If parents are conflicting and inclined to solve problems at the expense of children, a child starts responding such family situation by striving to dominate.

•Mother's over excessive care brings to the perception of parents in child's mind as separated, not a couple.

•The correlations demonstrate the fact that the more care mothers provide, the less sociable he gets and shows worse attitude to the siblings and his dominance in the family is growing.

•If the mother is attached to the family, a child tends to demonstrate less escapism from family issues while being more conflict-oriented.

•Research results are practice-led and can have practical significance to doctors, psychologists, volunteers and other working in caring professions, such as Departments of Palliative Care, departments of Pediatric Oncology and Hematology.

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