

**Research Digest:
Mental Health in Children and Adolescents**

Johnson, H. S., Inderbitzen-Nolan, H. M., & Schapman, A. M. (2005). A comparison between socially anxious and depressive symptomatology in youth: A focus on perceived family environment. *Journal of Anxiety Disorders, 19*(4), 423-442.

Researchers have begun investigating perceived parental rearing practices of youth who exhibit social anxiety as well as depression. Previous research has concluded that socially phobic adults perceived their parents as having been restrictive in the rearing styles. This is the first study to use a present-oriented methodology to investigate how different parental rearing styles affect youth with socially anxious, depressive, and mixed symptomatology.

Using questionnaires, a social anxiety scale, and an inventory, the researchers sampled 3,649 middle and high school students from a wide range of socioeconomic levels living in Midwestern cities in the same state.

Results revealed that family environment affected depressed youth more than socially anxious youth. The depressed participants were concerned with their mothers as being overly worried with other's opinions. In addition, they alleged that both parents were ashamed of their difficulties. Socially anxious youth perceived parental shame and overconcern with others' opinions. Although both groups contributed their current state to the role of restriction of family socialability, depressed subjects perceived this variable stronger. In addition, the depressed group indicated a more negative family environment, which complemented prior studies. The socially anxious group viewed their parents as more socially isolating and ashamed which also correlated with previous literature.

This research contributes to current literature regarding youth mental health and provides implications in clinical and counseling psychology. Moreover, the study may suggest the benefits of investigating family environments of youth and the effects such environments may play in youth experiencing socially anxious and/or depressive symptomatology.