

## **COPING WITH STRESS IN ADOLESCENTS WITH TYPE 1 DIABETES AND THEIR MOTHERS**

Ewa Pisula and Zofia Czaplinska

Faculty of Psychology, Warsaw University, Warsaw, Poland

**Objectives:** Coping with stress plays a vital role in the adjustment of adolescents with diabetes. The majority of studies in this area leave out the control group, limiting their power to make inferences about specificity vs. similarity of coping strategies used by these adolescents. The aims of this study were: (1) To compare coping strategies in adolescents with diabetes and healthy adolescents; (2) To compare coping strategies in girls and boys with diabetes; (3) To determine whether there is a relationship between adolescents' coping strategies and their mothers' coping styles.

**Material and Methods:** Adolescents (12-17 years) with Type 1 diabetes (N = 51) were compared with a control group of healthy secondary school students (N = 56) by means of a self-reported questionnaire measuring coping strategies (Adolescence Coping Checklist). Mothers of these adolescents (N = 107) completed the Coping Inventory for Stressful Situations, measuring 3 coping styles.

**Results:** Diabetic adolescents used the "seek professional help" strategy more often than their healthy peers. In addition, girls with diabetes reported using the "investing in close friends" strategy more often than boys, while in the control group girls were also more likely to use "seeking social support", "seeking spiritual support", and "relaxing diversions" strategies. Mothers' emotion-oriented coping style predicted focus-oriented coping in adolescents with diabetes. In the non-diabetic group, mothers' task-oriented coping predicted seeking professional help, while mothers' avoidance-oriented coping predicted seeking spiritual support.

**Conclusions:** The results have demonstrated that: (1) the only differences in terms of coping strategies in adolescents with diabetes and healthy adolescents were found in seeking professional help, (2) gender differences in coping with stress were significantly smaller in adolescents with diabetes than in healthy adolescents, (3) mothers' coping styles were predictors of coping strategies in adolescents, albeit there were differences in that respect between adolescents with diabetes and healthy adolescents.