

# The impact of mothers' education on aggression among adolescents

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## Introduction:

Most young children provoke negative reactions from parental interference. These reactions worsen the child's behavior, starting a harmful pattern(1) which leads to the emergence of an aggressive behavior (any behavior intending to harm another living being that desires to avoid such harm).(2) It may continue throughout a child's life.(3) Parents' educational level influence parental attitudes toward childcare.(4) Recently, in Iraq, a high prevalence of aggression was noticed among children and adolescents.(5,6) This work was carried out to highlight the aggressive behavior among adolescents raised by uneducated mothers.

A cross sectional study was carried out in Al-Sadr city, Baghdad. The target population was all students attending public secondary schools, who are resident in Al-Sadr city aged between 13 and 21 years. The data was collected by a self-administered questionnaire (Aggression—Problem Behavior Frequency Scale) (7); during the period from 1 February to 1 April 2019. The analysis examined the association between aggression (dependent variable) with mother education (independent variable) using the Chi-square, P value of < 0.05 was considered as statistically significant. Sample size was calculated by using the standard equation for calculation of sample size of cross-sectional studies.(11) The minimally needed sample was estimated to be 323 subjects for both genders. By using  $d_{eff}=2$ (12) to increase the precision of the study, we added 10% of the calculated sample size to compensate for the non-response(12); the sample size became 711 which was rounded to 720

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students (male and female). A multistage random sampling method was used: Eight out of eighty sectors were selected randomly. These eight sectors included 25 schools, from which eight schools were selected randomly. Two classes from each grade from each of these schools were chosen randomly. Finally, 15 students were selected randomly from each class. An official permission was obtained from the Directorate of Education of Al-Rusafa Al-Thalitha. A written consent was given by the school administration, participants, and their parents for participating in this study. The data will be kept confidential and will not be divulging except for the study purpose. A total of 720 students were included in this study. The mean age of participants was  $16.2 \pm 2.04$  years. There were 257 (35.7%) students raised by illiterate mothers. Out of those, there were 241 (93.8%) who reported aggressive behavior (physical, nonphysical, and/or relational aggression), Table1.

**Table 1: Distribution of Aggression by educational level of mothers in the study sample.**

Mothers' Education	Aggression		No aggression		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
illiterate	241	93.8	16	6.2	257	35.7
Primary or Intermediate	208	90.4	22	9.6	230	31.9
Secondary	91	69.5	40	30.5	131	18.2
College/Institute	56	64.4	31	35.6	87	12.1
Higher education	11	73.3	4	26.7	15	2.1
Total	607	84.3	113	15.7	720	100.0
<b>P value</b>	$\chi^2=73.252$		d.f.=4		p=0.001	

The finding of the highest percentage of aggressive behavior among students with illiterate mothers is in agreement with that reported in Egypt. (8). Highly educated parents, usually do not practice harsh parenting with no violent relationships, which in turn positively affects self-esteem, decision-making, competency, and happiness (positive emotional factors) in adolescents, quite opposite to low educated parents who practice harsh parenting.(4) The observed rate is higher than the recently reported rate in Baghdad, Iraq (33.3%).(5) This difference might be attributed to the densely packed city, and low socioeconomic status in the current study.(9,10)

We concluded that mother's illiteracy is associated with aggressive behavior among adolescents.

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#### تأثير تعليم الام على السلوك العدواني بين المراهقين

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