



Unpacking Parents' Mental Health Treatment Expectancies: The Roles of Perceived Social Class and Hopelessness

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INTRODUCTION

Parents' expectancies for mental health treatment predict treatment engagement and response for themselves and offspring. **Parental distress (PD)** and **social class (SC)** are also linked to treatment expectancies. However, most studies have examined *individual* PD and SC factors, leaving their independent links to treatment expectancies unexplored.

We examined **independent links of SC and PD-related factors to parents'** expectancies for the effectiveness of psychotherapy and medication-based mental health treatment for themselves and their children.

METHOD

Parents (N=630; 46.2% male; 74.1% Caucasian; *M* age=36.29) with children ages 7-17 (45.15% female) were recruited through Amazon's Mechanical Turk. Data were from a prior study (Schleider & Weisz, 2018).

Parents completed the following questionnaires:

- **SC FACTORS:** Demographic questionnaire
- **PD FACTORS:** Beck Hopelessness Scale; Brief Symptom Inventory-18
- **TREATMENT EXPECTANCIES:** TEs for psychotherapy and medication-based treatment for self and offspring on 1-10 scale

RESULTS

Tables 1a-b show SC and PD factors' independent links to TE, per separate linear regressions. Table 2 shows independent effects of SC and PD factors identified in initial regressions.

Table 1a: SC-TE Associations

	Psychotherapy Effectiveness Expectancies for Self (PE-S)	Psychotherapy Effectiveness Expectancies for Child (PE-C)	Medication Effectiveness Expectancies for Self (ME-S)	Medication Effectiveness Expectancies for Child (ME-C)
Education	-.004	-.086 ⁺	-.045	-.066
Dual Parent	.050	.085 ⁺	.038	.006
Perceived SES	.155**	.145*	.056	.091⁺
White	-.025	-.094	.094	.083
Black	.065	-.038	-.024	.045
Asian	.034	-.038	.070	.079
Latino	.027	-.018	-.099	-.068
R ²	.039	.032	.033	.023

⁺ p < .05, * p < .01, ** p < .001

Table 1b: PD-TE Associations

	PE-S	PE-C	ME-S	ME-C
Hopelessness	-.214**	-.221**	.021	.015
Psychopathology	-.009	-.050	.031	.021
Δ R ²	.049	.068	.002	.001

RESULTS CONTINUED

Table 2: Independent effects of PD, SC factors on TE

	PE-S	PE-C
Hopelessness	-.198**	-.234**
Perceived SES	.133*	.107⁺
Education	--	-.081
Dual-Parent	--	.052
R ²	.066	.081

DISCUSSION

- ✓ Lower perceived social class and higher parental hopelessness were independently linked with lower parental psychotherapy expectancies for parents and offspring
- ✓ Lower perceived SES was associated with lower medication TEs for offspring
- ✗ PD factors were unrelated to medication-based TEs

REFERENCES

- Nock, M.K., Ferriter, C. & Holmberg, E. (2007). Parent beliefs about treatment credibility and effectiveness: Assessment and relation to subsequent treatment participation. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 16, 27-38.
- Schleider, J. L., & Weisz, J. R. (2018). Parent expectancies and preferences for mental health treatment: The roles of emotion mind-sets and views of failure. *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology*.