

Decade long study shows educating parents key to preventing emotional disorders

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(Medical Xpress)—In the longest running study of its kind, researchers have evaluated the long-term effects of early intervention on the prevention of internalising disorders in children, such as anxiety or depression.

The study, led by Dr Ron Rapee, Director of the Centre for [Emotional Health](#) at Macquarie University, delivered a brief prevention program to parents of preschool aged children. An assessment was then conducted approximately 11 years after the initial program was delivered.

The results showed that overall, children whose parents did the prevention program were less likely to demonstrate internalising disorders and reported fewer symptoms of anxiety.

"The majority of prevention programs are aimed at school-aged children, often delivered in the school setting. However our research has found that a parent-focused intervention, even before a child first begins to exhibit problems with anxiety, can be highly successful in reducing internalising disorders," says Dr Rapee.

These findings, recently published in the online advance copy of the prestigious [Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry](#), represent the longest follow-up of a [prevention program](#) for anxiety to date and offers compelling evidence to the long-term benefits of early intervention programs.

"Over the past decade there has been a marked increase in interventions aimed at the prevention of internalising disorders. Given the low cost associated with this program these results show that there is huge long-term benefit to early intervention," says Dr Rapee.

More information: Article: "The preventative effects of a brief, early intervention for preschool-aged children at risk for internalising: follow-up into middle adolescence ", Rapee, R.. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* Published Online: 8 February 2013

Provided by Macquarie University

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