Preliminary results: Three personality tendencies of children with Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis

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Background and aims.

Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis (JIA) is an autoimmune disease with unclear etiology which presents an interaction between genetic, nutritional and immunological factors. Psychological factors have not been studied so far. The aim of the present study was to examine potential personality tendencies that may be correlated with JIA. The study was based on the Cognitive Orientation (CO) theory which enables to identify specific psychological tendencies that can be considered as risk factors for diseases. According to the CO theory the psychological risk factors may be represented as specific personality tendencies grounded in four types of beliefs:

- a) about self e.g. I am not performing all of my liabilities.
- b) about norms e.g. People should not performing all of their obligations
- c) about goals e.g. I do not want performing all of my obligations and liabilities.
- d) general beliefs e.g. Usually, people do not performing all of their liabilities.

Methods.

Participants.

	JIA	Healthy
N	38	21
Age in years (SD)*	12.50 (2.90)	12.05 (1.83)
Gender* <div><div><div>♂</div><div>♀</div></div></div>	<div>12</div> <div>26</div>	<div>10</div> <div>11</div>

* There are no differences between the two groups in age and gender.

Tools.

A CO questionnaire of pediatric JIA which includes stories about two children, each one representing one psychological trait. The participants' task was to check responses concerning one's similarity to the described child in terms of the four types of beliefs.

Each tendency was scored from 4 (low) to 8 (high).

Results.

Mean comparisons by T-test yielded significant results in three personality tendencies:

- (A). Not performing all one's obligations and liabilities
($t(55.90) = 3.38, p < 0.05$).
- (B). Being sensitive and careful not to be hurt by others
($t(52) = 3.04, p < 0.05$).
- (C). Keeping away from others and avoiding having many friends
($t(54) = 10.75, p < 0.001$).

Conclusions.

The CO approach enables identifying specific personality tendencies characteristic of children with JIA. Further research will clarify whether they can be considered as risk factors or rather as correlates resulting from the disease.

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