
Mother-child relationship, daily hassles, and behavior problems in Arab Muslim youth

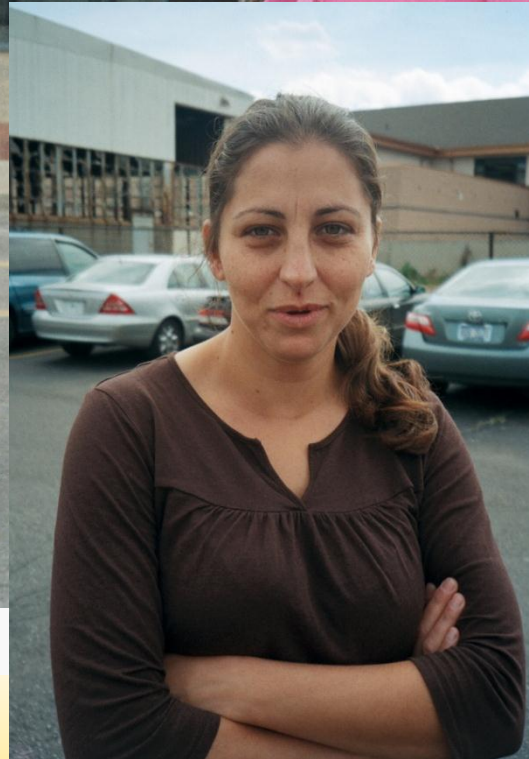
Karen J. Aroian, PhD, RN, FAAN

Thomas N. Templin, PhD

Edythe S. Hough EdD, RN, FAAN

Acknowledgements

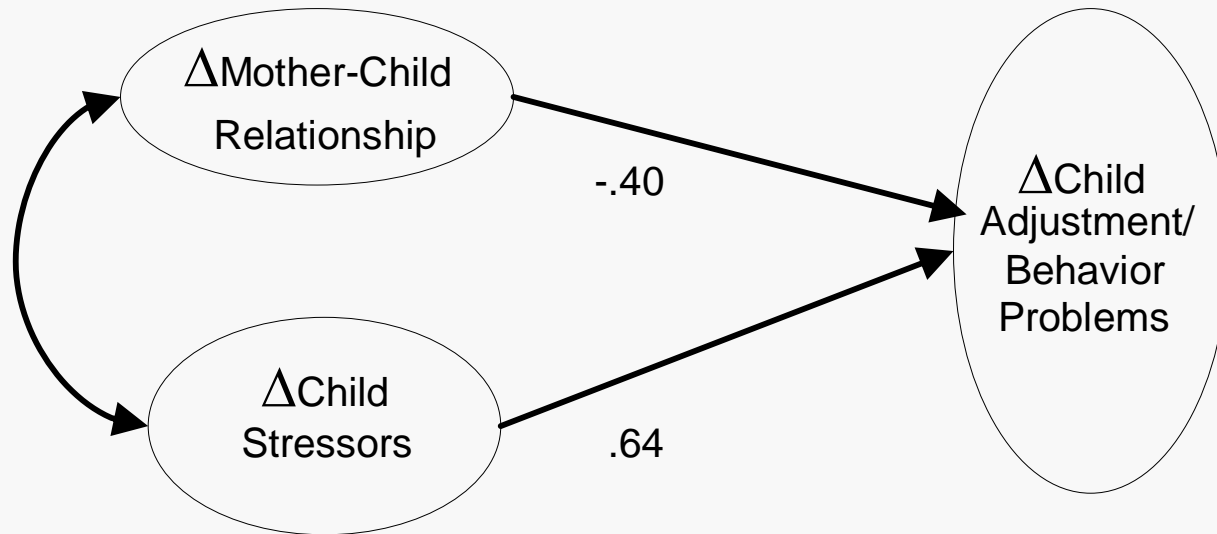
- Funding: US National Institutes of Health (RO1 NR 0008504) “Mother-child adjustment in Arab immigrants and refugees”
- Team for the larger study
 - PI, Aroian
 - Statistician, Templin
 - Family expert, Hough
 - Culture expert, Kulwicki
 - 12 Arabic-speaking data collectors



Previous Findings: Latent Change Model

- Adolescent stressors and mother-child relationship had the strongest direct effects on adolescent behavior problems at two different time points in a complex family level model of mother-child adjustment.

Latent Change Score Model



State of the Science on Youth Outcomes

- Ample findings:
 - a positive relationship between everyday stressors and behavior problems
 - an inverse relationship between a good mother-child relationship and behavior problems
- Little to no research investigating causal relationships

Mother-child relationship & Everyday Stressors

- Little understanding of the relationship, causal or otherwise, between quality of the mother-child relationship and everyday stressors for adolescents

Research Question

- What are the causal relationships between everyday stressors, quality of the mother-child relationship, and behavior problems in Arab Muslim immigrant youth?
 - Do the causal relationships differ for boys and girls?

Study Design

Three wave longitudinal study

Wave 1 (N = 633)
(baseline)

Mean Age (S.D.
pooled)

13.78 yrs. (2.24)

Wave 2 (N = 530)
(18 months)

15.33 yrs.

Wave 3 (N = 454)
(36 months)

16.62 yrs.

Study Criteria

- Arab Muslim immigrant mother living in greater Detroit (USA)
- Child between the ages of 11 and 15
- English language and reading ability *not* required

Constructs & Measures

Everyday Stressors

**Adolescent Daily Hassles Scale
(ADHS)**

Seidman et al., 1995

Mother-child Relationship

**Parent Scales of the Family
Peer Relationship
Questionnaire (FPRQ)**

Ellison, 1985

Child Behavior Problems

**Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL)
and Youth Self-report (YSR)**

Achenbach, 1991

ADHS

- Measures daily hassles in five domains:
 - Parents
 - Peers
 - School
 - Neighborhood
 - Resources
- Higher score = more hassles
- Assessed by youth only

FPRQ

- Three mother-child relationships scales:
 - **Togetherness** (frequency of activities)
 - **Disclosure** (from child to parent about various child experiences)
 - **Parent as mediator** (parent's role in facilitating peer relationships)
- Assessed by both mothers and adolescents
- Higher score=better mother-child relationship

CBCL / YSR

- Summed mother and child reports of child behavior problems
- Two Scales
 - Internalizing (withdrawn, somatic complaints, depression, anxiety)
 - Externalizing (delinquent & aggressive behavior)
- Higher score = more behavior problems

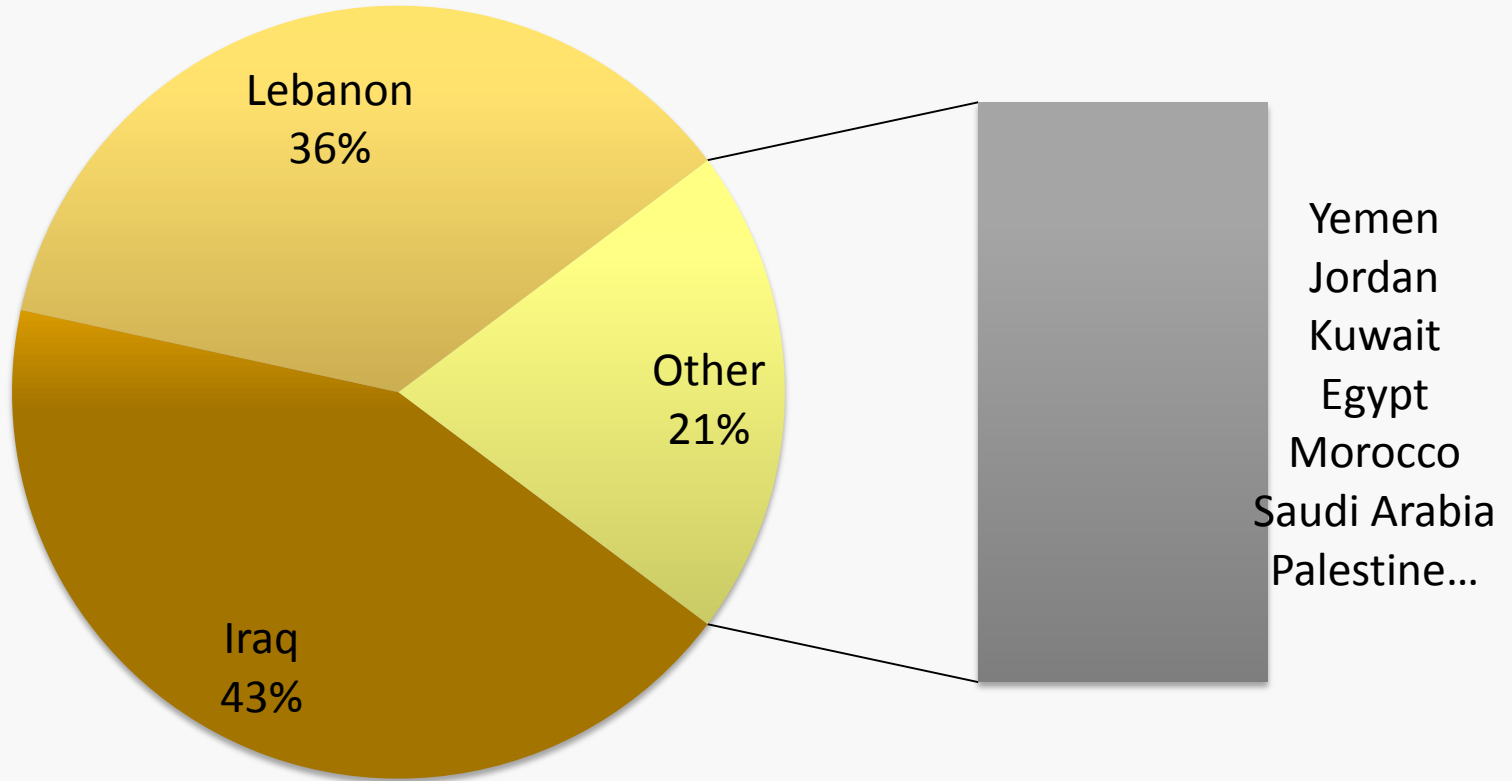
Data Analysis

- Planned series of cross-lagged structural equation models (SEM) for:
 - Time/age effects
 - Causal relationships
 - Other predictors (gender, other potentially confounding demographic characteristics)

Sample Characteristics

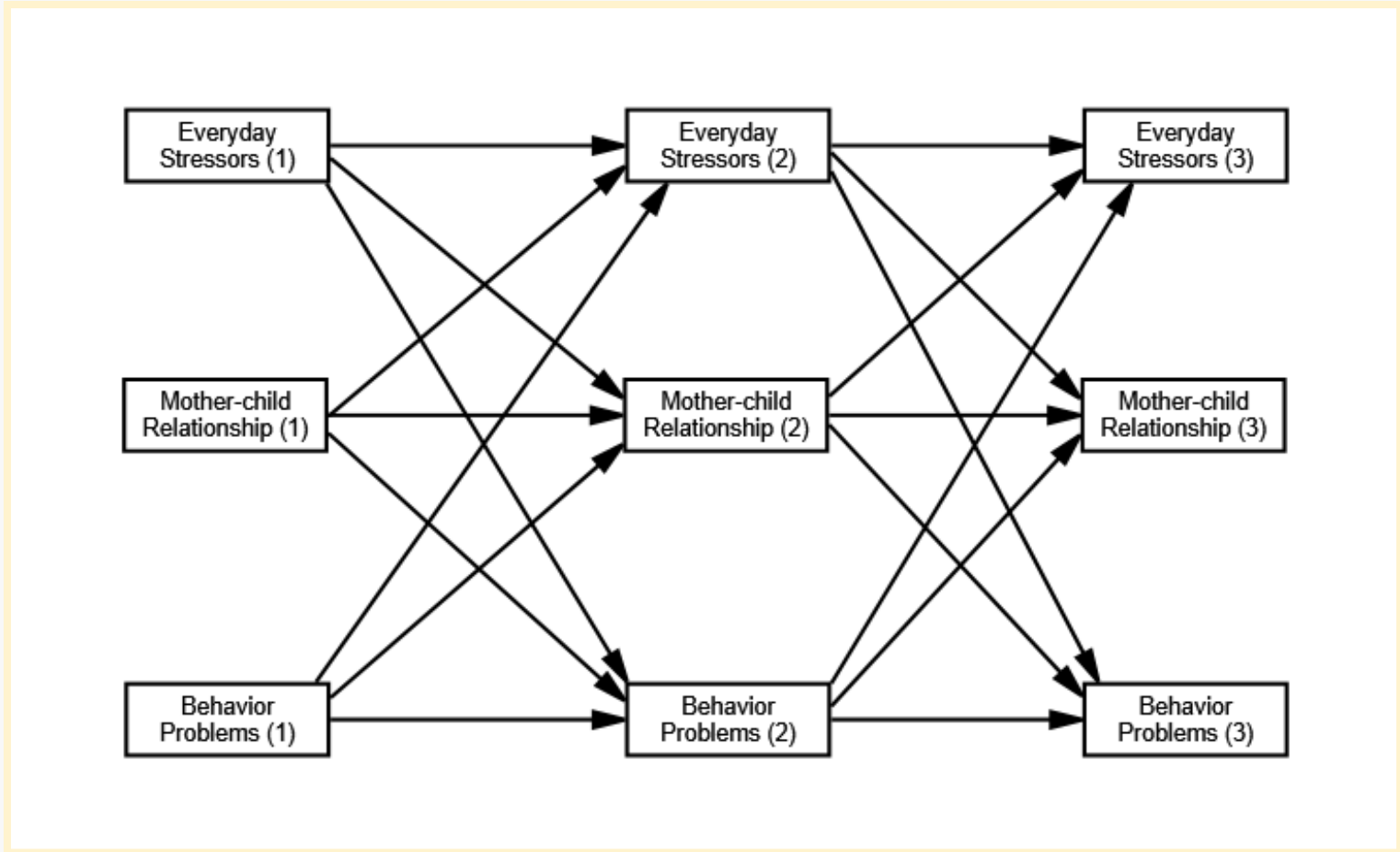
	<u>M (SD)</u>
Mother's age	40.61 (6.50)
Child age at immigration (excludes 16% born in US)	6.81 (3.83)
Mother's yrs. in US	8.16 (4.23)
	<u>Percent</u>
Child gender (% girls)	49.8
Married mothers	86.6
Mothers less than high school	64.8
Fathers less than high school	54.4
Fathers unemployed	42.1
Family income less than \$20,000	76.6

Family Country of Origin

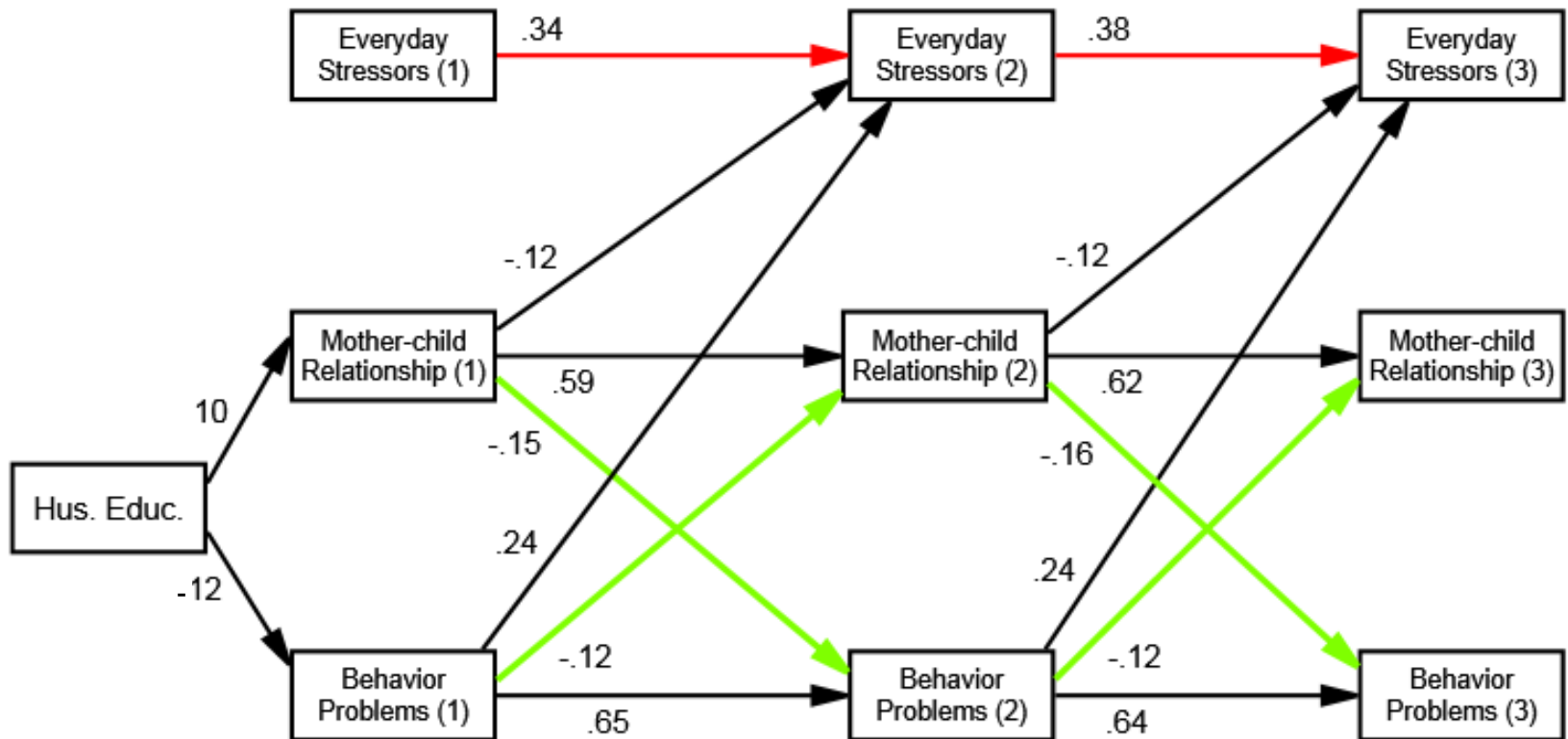


Hypothetical/Statistical Model

Three-wave Cross-lagged SEM



Final Model



Conclusions

- ◆ Everyday stressors are more a consequence than a cause of behavior problems
- ◆ Mother-child relationship and behavior problems are reciprocally related over time
- ◆ A poor mother child relationship contributes to everyday stressors and behavior problems
- ◆ Youth with less educated fathers more at risk for a poor mother-child relationship and greater behavior problems

Implications for Practice

Mother-child relationship --main point of intervention for Arab Muslim adolescents regardless of gender or age

- Intervening can reduce both everyday stressors and behavior problems
- Reducing behavior problems is essential to reducing everyday stressors

Implications for Research

- Identify Arab Muslim youth and mothers at risk for poor-mother child relationships
- Strategies to improve the mother-child relationship in Arab Muslim youth
- If the causal relationships noted in this study occur in other adolescent groups