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Relationship between Discordance in Parental Monitoring and Behavioral Problems among Chilean Adolescents

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Abstract

This study investigated the role of discrepancies between parent and youth reports of perceived parental monitoring in adolescent problem behaviors with a Chilean sample (N= 850). Higher levels of discordance concerning parental monitoring predicted greater levels of maladaptive youth behaviors. A positive association between parent-youth discordance and externalizing problems indicated that large adult-youth disagreement in parental monitoring may impose a great risk, despite protective efforts of parental monitoring. Although the direct relationship between parental monitoring and youth internalizing behaviors was not significant, parent-youth incongruence in monitoring was associated with greater levels of internalizing behaviors. Therefore, differing assessments of parental behaviors, as an indicator of less optimal family functioning, may provide important information about youth maladjustment and may potentially provide a beginning point for family-focused intervention.

Keywords

parental monitoring; perceptual differences; parents; adolescents; Chile

1. Introduction

1.1 Perceived differences in parent-youth relationships

Clinicians and researchers depend on obtaining information from parents and their children when assessing aspects of family functioning or adolescent psychopathology. Multi-informant studies have shown that when parents and children are asked about the same construct, there are often low to moderate levels of agreement between parent-youth reports (Achenbach, 2006; Guion, Mrug, & Windle, 2009; Pasch, Stigler, Perry, & Komro, 2010). Furthermore, these patterns of discordance are more salient among adolescents than younger-aged children (Tein, Roosa, & Michaels, 1994). In the case of perceived family behaviors, empirical studies have found parent-youth agreement to be small to moderate,

ranging from 0.13 to 0.43 (e.g., Tein et al., 1994; Aquilino, 1999; Guion et al., 2009; Pettit, Laird, Dodge, Bates, & Criss, 2001). For example, the literature has shown that there is a substantial amount of disagreement between parents and youth when measuring family constructs, such as the frequency of parents telling the youth that they love them, parental use of corporal punishment, the level of parental monitoring, warm or harsh parenting, psychological control, intimacy, or parental involvement (e.g., Guion et al., 2009; Noller, 1992; Pettit et al., 2001; Purdie, Carroll, & Roche, 2004).

Understanding the differences in how adolescents and their parents perceive aspects of their relationships is important because in prior research, discordance has been linked to negative adolescent adjustment. For instance, Guion et al. (2008) found in a longitudinal study of early adolescents that parent-youth incongruence in reports of parenting practices predicted subsequent internalizing problems, such as depression and anxiety. As for externalizing behaviors, Guion et al.'s study did not report a significant link between parent-youth discrepancies in perceived levels of parenting practices and prospective youth's delinquent behavior (e.g., stealing, drug dealing, fighting). In another study, however, Lippold and colleagues (2010) found that mothers who overestimated their knowledge of their offspring's whereabouts had adolescents who were involved in greater levels of delinquent behavior. Also youth from these families had more favorable attitudes toward substance use compared with those from families with mothers who did not overestimate their knowledge.

Researchers have interpreted the presence of differential youth-parent assessments as a representation of an important aspect of parent-youth relationships (Larson & Richards, 1994). This view fits with a transactional perspective of human development in which behavior is considered to be a product of unique biological, social, and environmental interactions that act simultaneously on, and are subsequently changed, by individuals (Compas, Hinden, & Gerhardt, 1995; Sameroff, 2000). According to this perspective, individuals are influenced by different sets of biological and social characteristics which, in the case of adolescents and parents who inhabit different social chronological environments (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), can give rise to differences in perspectives. Research on perceptual differences between parents and adolescents is an important area of inquiry because differences in reports are a reflection of the quality of interactions between parents and their adolescents. There is growing evidence that such differences between parent and youth reporters are not random noise or error, but reflect true underlying problems (Tein et al., 1994; Guion et al., 2009). For instance, some have suggested that discrepancies found between parent and youth reports of adolescent functioning may suggest family problems in communicating adequately and can further be used to develop appropriate consulting strategies (Ferdinand, van der Ende, & Verhulst, 2004; Grills & Ollendick, 2002). In fact, research by Grills and Ollendick (2002) has suggested that low family conflict is associated with the degree of agreement between parents and children on diagnostic measures of mental health disorders. Other researchers have shown that parents' own level of mental health can bias the amount of discrepancy found between parents' and adolescent's reports (Hughes & Gullone, 2010). Together, these findings suggest that discrepant reports between parents and their children are important aspects of adolescent development, have significant implications for treatment decisions, and that they represent significant points of inquiry (Ferdinand et al., 2004; Guion et al., 2009).

1.2 Parental monitoring during adolescence

During adolescence, successful attempts by parents to provide oversight of the activities and knowing the whereabouts of their children are an essential part of effective parenting strategies (Dishion & McMahon, 1998). Several studies have postulated that when parental monitoring, defined as parental awareness of youth's whereabouts, is adequate, it serves as an indicator of a power-neutral parenting strategy that is based on mutual communication

and is a protective factor against negative youth outcomes (Barber & Harmon, 2002; Pettit et al., 2001). A large body of research has suggested that higher levels of parental monitoring through knowledge of youth's activities are associated with lower levels of substance use, antisocial behavior, and delinquency (Lansford, Criss, Pettit, Dodge, & Bates, 2003; Pettit et al., 2001; Simons-Morton, 2005). There are other studies, although few in number, that have found support for the idea that greater parental monitoring is significantly associated with lower internalizing behaviors, as well (Formoso, Gonzales, & Aiken, 2000; Scaramella, Conger, & Simons, 1999).

More recently, a greater understanding of parental monitoring as a practice that involves both parents and adolescents, has uncovered the fact that there is often disagreement between what parents report about their own monitoring behavior and what adolescents report about their parents' monitoring activities. Kerr and Stattin (2000) reported a correlation of 0.43 between Swedish youth's and parents' reports of parental knowledge. In a community study of children transitioning into adolescence by Pettit et al. (2001), the correlation between parent's and youth's report of perceived parental monitoring was 0.26. Similarly, in Lippold, Greenberg, and Feinberg (2010), the correlation between mother's and youth's perceptions of maternal knowledge was 0.15.

In the past decade, there have been many active scholarly conversations about the idea that parental monitoring is dependent on what youth disclose of their whereabouts, and especially, youth involvement in problem behaviors during adolescence. In fact, Kerr and Stattin (2000) empirically found that the youth's voluntary willingness to disclose information was the greatest source of parental knowledge of their off-spring's whereabouts, activities, and peer-relationships. In a subsequent study, Kerr and colleagues (2010) established temporality between youth's disclosure and level of parental knowledge based on longitudinal data. The authors identified that youth's willingness to share information was a significant temporal predictor of parental knowledge of the whereabouts and activities of their children (Kerr, Stattin, & Burk, 2010).

These findings may suggest that knowledge-based monitoring is a parental behavior that heavily relies on the transactional relationship between the youth and parent (Lippold, Greenberg, & Feinberg, 2010). In situations when there is such large knowledge gap between parents and youths in perceived levels of parental knowledge of adolescent whereabouts, as observed in the previously reported correlations, it can be difficult for parents to provide the necessary guidance to protect youths from developing maladaptive behaviors (Lippold et al., 2010). In sum, given the significance of parental monitoring during adolescence, and possibly large disagreement across respondents' reports, the degree of incongruence in perceived levels of parental monitoring associated with youth's externalizing and internalizing behaviors of youth merits further investigation.

1.3 Chilean adolescents in context

In recent years, the pace of adolescent drug use and problem behaviors such as violence and involvement in gangs in Chile has been increasing at alarming rates (UNOCD, 2009; CICAD, 2006). The majority of Chilean adolescents (87%) live in urban settings and about 67% of all adolescents have consumed alcohol in the past year (Instituto Nacional de la Juventud, 2010). Contemporary work conducted with Chilean urban adolescents suggests that they are more likely to disclose information to their parents than are U.S. adolescents (Darling, Cumsille, Peña-Alampay, & Coatsworth, 2009). Research on the consequences of parental monitoring with Chilean adolescents has indicated that when parents keep track of their child's activities, adolescents put greater effort into their studies and they have greater levels of competence and initiative (Ingoldsby, Schvaneveldt, Supple, & Bush, 2004), findings that are consistent with those of research conducted with U.S. samples (Dornbusch,

Ritter, Leiderman, Roberts, & Fraleigh, 1987; Hoeltje, Silbum, Garton, & Zubrick, 1996; Melby, 1996). Although the literature in the U.S. has explored the concept of agreement and disagreement between multiple informants on reports of parental monitoring, the same is not true in Chile. Thus, to our knowledge there are no other studies that have examined parental monitoring among Chilean families let alone parent-youth disagreement in parental behaviors of any kind using a Latin American sample.

1.4 Discordant reports in context

Current research indicates that the lifetime prevalence of mental health disorders among community-based samples in Latin America ranges between 17–25% (Alarcón, 2003; Andrade, 2000; Bijl et al., 2003). Despite the fact that Chile has a decent democratic history and has one of the strongest economies in Latin America, recent reports suggest that Chile might have one of the highest disease burdens resulting from psychiatric disorders (Vincent et al., 2004), in addition to having high rates of violent and delinquent acts (Cruz, 2000; Oviedo & Rodríguez, 1999; Oviedo Saavedra, 1994). In order to better understand and reduce the mental health problems and violent and delinquent behaviors adolescents are experiencing, parents need to be able to keep track of their child's activities as part of age-appropriate parenting practices. In such a turbulent setting, it becomes important to assess the degree of agreement and disagreement between Chilean parents and their adolescents on the level of parental monitoring.

1.5 Contribution and research question

Despite its potential importance, the question of whether large parent-child disagreement in perceived levels of parenting predicts youth's adjustment has generally been understudied. There are only a handful of studies that have investigated whether discordance in youth-parent reports of parental monitoring levels is associated with youth's behavioral outcomes. Furthermore, to our understanding, no existing work has examined this issue using a Latin American youth sample. Based on the existing literature, we hypothesized that discordance in parental monitoring – as an indicator of the knowledge gap of supervision and communication about the whereabouts between the child and parent or disagreement about family life – would also provide meaningful information about the parent-youth relationship, over and above the direct effect of monitoring itself. Therefore, this paper addressed (a) whether parent-youth discordance of perceived parental monitoring was predictive of youth's outcomes and (b) whether the suspected detrimental effect of discordance was heightened or reduced with youth's age.

2. Methods

2.1 Sample

Analysis was based on a convenience sample of 850 youth and their parents from a study funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) and approved by the Institutional Review Boards of two collaborating institutions, the University of Michigan and the University of Chile Institute for Nutrition and Technology of Food (INTA). This study, conducted in 2008–2010, contains extensive information regarding demographic characteristics, parental relationships, and family socioeconomic status (SES) of 1,068 adolescents from municipalities of lower-middle to low SES in Santiago, Chile. Participants were recruited from an earlier study of iron-deficiency anemia (Lozoff, 2003). Both adolescents and their parents each completed a 2-hour questionnaire in Spanish administered by Chilean psychologists. Because several questions in the interview assessed identical constructs for both parents and youth, we were able to identify and analyze the discrepancies in both the youth and parent reports.

2.2 Measures

2.2.1 Dependent variables—The study's dependent variables were adolescents self-report of their externalizing and internalizing problem behaviors.

Externalizing problems: Youth were asked questions from the YSR (Youth Self Report) which is a common and international measure of problem behaviors during adolescence which together with the Child Behavior Checklist consist of the Achenbach System of Empirically Based Assessment family of forms (Achenbach, 1991; Achenbach & Rescorla, 2001). The YSR contains a total of 112 items that assess two broad categories of problem behaviors: externalizing and internalizing problems. Adolescents' are asked to report on whether each behavior is "not true" (0), "somewhat or sometimes true" (1), "very true or often true" (2) of them for the previous 6 months. The total externalizing behavior score was created using the 17 aggression items (e.g., "I am mean to others," "I destroy my own things," "I threaten to hurt people") and 15 rule-breaking items (e.g., "I do not feel guilty after misbehaving," "I break rules at home, school or elsewhere," "I hang around with kids who get in trouble") ($\alpha = 0.85$).

Internalizing problems: To assess internalizing problems, youth were asked questions from the second broad category of symptoms included in the YSR. This scale comprised 13 anxious depression items (e.g., "I am too fearful or anxious," "I fear I might think or do something bad," "I feel worthless or inferior") and 8 withdrawn depression items (e.g., "I am unhappy, sad, or depressed," "I am withdrawn, does not get involved with others," "I am too shy or timid") ($\alpha = 0.84$).

2.2.2 Independent variables—The three independent variables were parental monitoring as reported by the youth, parental monitoring reports of the youth's parents, and the discordance in levels of perceived parental monitoring.

Youth reports of parental monitoring: Parental monitoring was measured by aggregating responses from five questions regarding perceived parental awareness and knowledge of the youth's whereabouts. For this study we selected five questions from an originally 10-item scale of parental monitoring (Patterson & Capaldi, 1998) because they were identical in both the youth and parent questionnaires. Some of the items included were "If your mom/dad or guardian are not home, how often do you leave a note for them about where you are going?" and "How often, before you go out, do you tell your mom/dad or guardian when you will be back." The response categories for these questions were "All of the time"(1), "Most of the time"(2), "Sometimes"(3), "Hardly ever" (4), and "Never"(5). After reverse coding all of the items, the composite score was created by adding the responses to the five questions with higher scores representing more youth report of parental monitoring. The internal consistency (α) for youth's report of parental monitoring was 0.60.

Parental reports of parental monitoring: The same five questions that assessed youth's perception of parental monitoring were used to assess parental reports which also came from the same 10-item scale of parental monitoring (Patterson & Capaldi, 1998). As was done for the adolescent reports, the items in the parent report of parental monitoring were first reverse coded and then aggregated. Higher scores represented greater levels of parental reports of parental knowledge gained by means of youth's disclosure of information by communicating with, or having access to, parents. The internal consistency (α) for parents' report of parental monitoring was 0.57.

Discordance in parental monitoring: The discordance between youth and parental reports of parental monitoring was measured by creating a new variable that measured the absolute

value of the difference in perceived levels of parental monitoring reported between youth and parents (Feinberg, Howe, Reiss, & Hetherington, 2000).

2.2.3 Control variables—In the analyses we controlled for youth demographic and family characteristics, as these factors have been found in numerous studies to relate to youth's externalizing and internalizing behaviors (Booth, Scott, & King, 2010; Pettit et al., 2001; Scaramella et al., 1999), we describe these variables below.

Demographic characteristics: *Age* was measured in years and *male* was a dichotomous variable coded as “1” if male, and “0” if female.

Family characteristics: *Parental education* was the number of years of completed education of the mother (or father, for youths without a mother). *Family income* was the total monthly household income of both mother and father (if applicable) measured in thousands of pesos Chilenos. To measure *family structure*, we included a variable which was coded as “1” if the youth lived with both parents and “0” otherwise (e.g., lived with single mother or grandparents only).

2.3 Analysis strategy

First, descriptive statistics were generated in order to illustrate the general characteristics of our unique Chilean youth and parent sample. Second, we identified the level of discordance between each youth and parent dyads by investigating the Pearson correlations between youth and parent reports of parental monitoring. We also conducted a Wilcoxon signed rank sum test to evaluate the mean differences between the two sources of information. Third, ordinary least squares regression was used to examine the degree to which youth-parent discordance in parental monitoring would predict youth's behavioral problems while controlling for the other variables in the model. The interaction between age and discordance was included to examine the moderating effect of age.

3. Results

3.1 Descriptive and bivariate analyses

Table 1 describes the general characteristics of the Chilean sample ($N=850$) from lower-middle to low SES municipalities of Santiago. The sample was comprised of 51% male adolescents, who were on average 14.3 years-old. The average score for externalizing and internalizing behaviors were 13.1 and 13.5, respectively. The average number of years of parental education was 9.9 years and average monthly family income was 315,000 pesos (500 Chilean pesos is approximately \$1.00 US dollar), respectively. About 67% of the youth lived with both their father and mother.

Additionally, the Pearson correlations across various measures indicate that none of the measures were potentially subject to the problem of multicollinearity. Pearson correlations between the youth-parent reports in parental monitoring were low to moderate, with a range from 0.15 to 0.42. There were evident patterns of disagreement between youth and parent. The correlation between total youth and parent reports of parental monitoring was 0.31. Also, results from the Wilcoxon signed rank sum test confirmed that the parent's report of parental monitoring was significantly higher than that of youth's perception of parental monitoring ($p < 0.001$) for all five parental monitoring questions. We used this test instead of the paired sample t-test to avoid imposing a distributional assumption of normality on the parental monitoring variables.

3.2 Multivariate analysis

Multivariate regression models were utilized in order to estimate the effect of discordance on youth externalizing behavior while controlling for levels of parental monitoring, and holding other variables constant. In regards to testing the relationship between discordance in levels of perceived parental monitoring and externalizing behavior, two models were compared (Table 2). Model 1 examined the relationship between parental monitoring and youth's externalizing behavior while Model 2 showed the importance of discordance and the interaction between discordance and age. In Model 1, higher levels of parental monitoring were associated with lower levels of externalizing behavior. We found that one standardized unit increase in the parental monitoring measure was associated with reductions of the externalizing YSR score by 1.01 ($=0.15*7.34$) points. As for demographic measures, older age predicted greater behavioral problems but being male did not. Among the family measures, only living in a two parent family had a negative relationship with externalizing behavior.

In Model 2, the measure for discordance between parent and adolescent reports of parental monitoring was added to examine the relationship with adolescent reports of externalizing behavior problems. In this model, we controlled for levels of parental monitoring to account for differing levels of discordance across different levels of parental monitoring. We found that greater levels of discordance between parent and youth reports of parental monitoring were associated with greater levels of externalizing behavioral problems, holding all other variables constant. In detail, a one standardized unit increase in the discordance measure was associated with higher levels of YSR externalizing scores by 5.28 ($=0.72*7.34$) points. The age and discordance interaction was not significant, indicating that the harmful relationship between discordance and externalizing behavior does not significantly change with age. Similar to Model 1, only the family structure measure was significantly related to youth's report of their externalizing behavior, among all variables in the family-domain.

With regards to internalizing behavior problems (Table 3), we followed the same procedure of model comparison as we did for externalizing behaviors. In Model 3 we examined the effect of parental monitoring, in addition to our youth demographic and family characteristic variables, on internalizing problems. Parental monitoring was not associated with internalizing problems. In addition, males, relative to females, had lower internalizing behavior scores. The family characteristic variables were also important for internalizing problems. Specifically, we found that greater levels of parental education and living in a two-parent family were predictive of lower internalizing scores.

In Model 4 we added the discordance variable as well as the discordance and age interaction. Although parental monitoring was not significantly associated with internalizing behavior problems, parent-youth discordance on parental monitoring was a significant predictor. Specifically, in Model 4 we found that a one standard deviation increase in discordance was associated with 5.9 ($=0.81*7.33$) higher points in the internalizing YSR score. More interestingly, the significant negative interaction term between age and discordance suggested that the detrimental effect of discordance may become smaller among older youths (Figure 1). As in Model 3, the parent's level of education and family structure significantly predicted youth's internalizing behaviors.

4. Discussion

4.1 Differential perception of parenting

This study made use of parent reports, youth reports, and a measure that combined information from both informants regarding the level of parental monitoring among Chilean adolescents. The use of information from multiple respondents has become a "gold

standard” in child and family research (Renk, 2005). Therefore, from a methodological point of view, reports from this study may be more robust because the results incorporated multiple informants to increase the objectivity and reliability of the findings, and lowering the risk of having single-reporter bias (Lippold et al., 2010; Taber, 2010). From a substantive view, this study found large disagreements in the perceived parental monitoring levels between youth and parent using a Chilean sample. The correlation between total youth and parent reports of parental monitoring was 0.31 which is fairly consistent with the low to moderate levels of discordance as suggested in the literature (e.g., Kerr & Stattin, 2000; Pettit et al., 2001). Furthermore, this study reaffirmed the greater need to investigate studies on parent-youth disagreement, and further, its relationship with the wellbeing of the family members (Ferdinand et al., 2004). We also found that parents report higher levels of monitoring than youth which may reflect the tendency for parents to more favorably report on their parenting behavior, while children tend to report parental patterns less favorably than their parents (Bögels & Van Melick, 2004; Aquilino, 1999). This may also indicate an information gap, in which parents overestimate their knowledge of their children’s whereabouts and affiliations as has been previously suggested in the literature (Cottrell et al., 2003).

4.2 Discordance predicted externalizing behaviors

With regards to direct relationships between parental monitoring and youth’s externalizing problems, the study results were consistent with existing literature. In Models 1 and 2, parental monitoring was a significant protective factor for youth’s externalizing behavior problems. This study provided further evidence that parent’s ability to have more knowledge of their offspring’s whereabouts and daily activities are associated with lower levels of externalizing behavior among youth.

Additionally, the present study indicated that greater levels of parent-youth discordance in perceived levels of parental monitoring can be a risk factor to youth’s development. In Model 2, we found that discordance was a significant predictor of youth’s externalizing behaviors. The fact that greater levels of discordance were positively associated with externalizing problems indicates that although parental monitoring may have a protective role in youth’s externalizing behaviors, the existence of large parent-youth disagreement in parental monitoring may suggest the presence of an even greater risk to adolescent development. The positive association between discordance and externalizing behavior suggested that high disagreement levels in perceived parental monitoring are detrimental to youth psychosocial outcomes. Conversely, when the youth’s perception of parent’s behavior is closer to adult’s assessment of their own parenting practices, we would expect lower levels of externalizing behaviors. The youth-adult perception gap may become smaller with increased opportunities for parent-adolescent communication, whereby youths have frequent conversations with parents, and consequently, inform them of their whereabouts. In fact, there have been studies that have found that increased communication, as a means to exchange information, can serve as a protective factor against youth’s involvement in risky activities (Guilamo-Ramos, Jaccard, Dittus, & Bouris, 2006). The identification of exact mechanisms that link discordance with youth’s problem behavior through formal tests would provide greater contribution to the literature.

4.3 Discordance predicted internalizing behaviors

In the case of youth’s internalizing behaviors, parental monitoring was not a significant predictor. The tendency for parental monitoring to have a more salient effect on externalizing behaviors relative to internalizing behaviors has been reported in previous studies (e.g., Barber, 1994; Pettit et al., 2001). These studies explained that parental control strategies that manipulate the youth’s behavior (such as monitoring and supervision), rather

than emotions (such as shaming and guilt-induction), are more likely to trigger negative actions toward the external environment, than internalizing behaviors. The non-significant parental monitoring coefficients in this study may also represent how the different loci of parental control demonstrate different relational patterns with youth's adjustment.

Although the direct relationship between parental monitoring and youth internalizing behaviors was not significant, incongruence in perceived levels of monitoring significantly predicted internalizing behaviors (Model 4). This finding is worth attending to because it underscores the importance of parenting-youth discrepancies, beyond the direct measure of parenting behavior. Based on findings from studies that have suggested that greater parent-youth incongruence is reflective of poor family functioning, such as family conflict or poor communication (Ferdinand et al., 2004; Grills & Ollendick, 2002), the task of reducing discordance across informants may need to start by strengthening overall family cohesion. Furthermore, we found that the negative relationship between discordance and internalizing behaviors decreased with youth's age. We posit that this is possibly due to the growing peer influence as youth become older (e.g., Hartup, 1996; Bukowski & Adams, 2005), but this is also a future area of research that warrants further investigation.

4.4 Limitations and future work

Findings from this study must be taken into consideration with the following two limitations in mind. First, the findings regarding the relationship between discordance and adolescent problem behaviors can only tentatively be generalized beyond this low-income population of adolescents and their parents in Santiago, Chile. Second, the study analyzed cross-sectional data which do not allow us to make temporal or causal inferences regarding these relationships. It is possible that greater parental monitoring may in fact be a response to higher levels of adolescent problem behaviors (Laird, Pettit, Bates, & Dodge, 2003). We would need temporal information at minimum, and appropriate statistical models, to extend the study results to make any causal claim.

5. Conclusions

Notwithstanding the above mentioned limitations, the present study contributed to the literature by examining the relationship between discordance in perceived levels of parental monitoring and youth's psychosocial outcomes. The study results indicated that there is a non-ignorable relationship between youth's maladaptive behavior and the gap in youth's and parent's own assessment of parenting behavior. Therefore, discordance, as an indicator of poor family functioning can provide important information about youth's maladjustments. For instance, as shown in this study, although the main association between youth's internalizing behavior and parental monitoring was not significant, greater discordance in parenting monitoring predicted a strikingly higher YSR score. From a policy perspective, the findings of this research suggested that producing a shared understanding between parents and children may provide additional resources in reducing youth externalizing and internalizing behavior.

The field of research that investigates parent-youth incongruence in various parenting domains in relation to youth outcomes has generally been understudied. A longstanding tradition of empirical research has highlighted the importance of parental behaviors, particularly refraining from physical discipline (Grogan-Kaylor, 2005; Gershoff et al., 2010), and emphasizing parental warmth (Scaramella et al., 1999; Galambos, Barker, & Almeida, 2003), in reducing youth's maladaptive behaviors. Furthermore, there has been some evidence of low agreement in assessing the parent's use of psychological control (e.g., Pettit et al., 2001; Bögels & Van Melick, 2004). Given these findings, future work

examining how perceived discrepancies in other parental domains relate with youth outcomes can help researchers and clinicians better understand the parent-youth relationship.

Finally, the results from this study may have substantive implications for policy makers and practitioners who are involved in promoting family and parenting intervention programs for youth with behavioral challenges. Expanding discordance research to clinical populations may be informative for treatment and intervention (Guion et al., 2009). Furthermore, studies that investigate the relationship between discordance in perceived parenting behaviors and children's outcome by comparing clinical and non-clinical samples (e.g., Siqueland, Kendall, & Steinberg, 1996) can help practitioners understand the correlates of psychopathologies among youth.

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Highlights

- Parent-youth perceptual differences are an indicator of less optimal family functioning over and above other risk and protective factors.
- The correlation between Chilean youth and parent reports of parental monitoring is low.
- Reducing parent-youth discordance may potentially be helpful for family-focused intervention.

Figure 1.
Relationship between Discordance and Internalizing Behavior Score by Age

Table 1Descriptive Summary ($N=850$)

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Discordance	0.84	0.67	0	3.8
Age	14.30	1.43	11.92	17.75
Male	0.51	0.50	0	1
Education	9.89	2.94	1	21
Income	315	170	70	1,500
Both Parents	0.67	0.47	0	1
Externalizing Behavior	13.06	7.34	0	46
Internalizing Behavior	13.48	7.32	0	40

Table 2

Predictors of Externalizing Behavior ($N=850$)

Variables	Externalizing Behavior (YSR)					
	(1)			(2)		
	Standardized Coefficient (β)	Unstandardized Coefficient (B)	Standard Error	Standardized Coefficient (β)	Unstandardized Coefficient (B)	Standard Error
Parental Monitoring (Adult Report)	-0.15	-1.58	(0.36) ***	-0.16	-1.67	(0.35) ***
Discordance						
Discordance * Age						
Age	0.075	0.38	(0.18) *	0.13	0.66	(0.27) *
Male	-0.0087	-0.13	(0.50)	-0.036	-0.52	(0.48)
Education	-0.034	-0.086	(0.089)	-0.027	-0.067	(0.086)
Income	0.0018	0.080	(1.54)	-0.0027	-0.11	(1.48)
Both Parents	-0.080	-1.24	(0.53) *	-0.070	-1.09	(0.51) *
Constant		16.18	3.34 ***		9.96	4.46 *
Adjusted R-squared		0.036			0.114	

Standard errors in parentheses;

p<0.001,**
p<0.01,*
p<0.05

Table 3

Predictors of Internalizing Behavior ($N=850$)

Variables	Internalizing Behavior (YSR)			
	(3)		(4)	
	Standardized Coefficient (β)	Unstandardized Coefficient (B)	Standard Error	Standardized Coefficient (β)
Parental Monitoring (Adult Report)	-0.035	-0.37	(0.55)	-0.036
Discordance				
Discordance * Age				
Age	0.034	0.17	(0.17)	0.81
Male	-0.26	-3.87	(0.48) ***	8.83
Education	-0.12	-0.29	(0.086) ***	-0.51
Income	-0.019	-0.82	(1.49)	0.61
Both Parents	-0.13	-1.97	(0.51) ***	-4.04
Constant		19.08	3.22 ***	-0.28
Adjusted R-squared		0.098		-0.98
				-1.94
				(0.51) ***
				4.43

Standard errors in parentheses;

p<0.001,**
p<0.01,*
p<0.05