

## **ABSTRACTS**

## **Social support and its relation with psychosocial stress, psychosomatic symptoms and anxiety**

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### **Abstract**

Social support was assessed by an adaptation of the Sarason Social Support Questionnaire (SSQ) given to 120 University of Athens students and 119 elementary school teachers. A number of ecological determinants of social support were examined and the relations between social support and psychosocial stress, psychosomatic symptoms and anxiety were investigated. Frequent contact with parents and with relatives and perception of a friendly neighborhood were predictive of the number of supportive persons. Satisfaction from available social support was a moderator of psychosocial stress and psychosomatic symptoms while number of supportive persons mitigated anxiety. Cultural definitions constitute the background against which findings are discussed.

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## **Subjects and objects in empirical research**

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### **Abstract**

This paper presents some methodological issues regarding the relationships between subjects and object which exist in every research, even if they are ignored or suppressed. The differences between clinical experience and empirical research are examined and the importance of demand in social research is stressed. Is there only one or more than one demands? What is the nature of these demands? To whom is the demand really addressed? The ideological and emotional relationships between the subject/researcher and the psychosocial subjects to whom he addresses himself and with whom he communicates in the context of his research, are also mentioned. The author examines the possible effects of various two - way transferences and counter transferences formed between subjects and researcher in the course of an interview, on the empirical data which have been collected. Finally, this paper refers to the writer's own experience as well as to other relevant research.

## Cross-cultural studies on individualism and collectivism

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### Abstract

This paper presents and defines the terms “individualism” and “collectivism” and introduces the concepts of the ingroup and the outgroup as linked with collectivism. Cross-cultural studies show that contemporary communities can be placed on a individualism-collectivism continuum according to the specific characteristics of the social behaviour, beliefs and feelings of those within them. This differentiation between communities can be made according to certain factors which were discovered by socio-cultural research. Some tentative explanations are offered of the evolution of individualism, as observed in the contemporary communities studied throughout the world. The most important underlying factor appears to be economic affluence, which leads to economic independence and consequently to personal independence with a concomitant loss of identity. In societies where personal identity is no longer determined by demographic characteristics, such as place of origin, language, religion or race (i. e. “where one belongs”), the individual acquires an identity through his/her “belongings”, hence the extreme consumeristic and materialistic attitude observed in highly individualistic societies. Sociological research reveals that in collectivistic communities the incidence of mental and psychogenic disorders is considerably lower than in individualistic societies. These findings have led to the hypothesis that lack of social integration, independence of goals and lack of ingroup support create a vicious circle which promotes mental ill-health. This hypothesis remains to be tested empirically.

## **School performance: Social, mental and physical parameters**

### **Part A: Description of the methodology and presentation of the relation between school performance and social parameters**

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#### **Abstract**

This study was sponsored by the Institute of Child Health and carried out by a multidisciplinary team of researchers. The goal of the research project was to investigate social and physical parameters which affect school performance and failure of children in primary school. In this section the sample and methodology are described and the analysis of social data is presented. The sample consists of 602 boys and girls selected from the first and second grade of 39 private and public primary schools in Athens and Piraeus. The selection was made on the basis of school performance and included pupils from all socio-economic strata of the city population. For the collection of social data structured questionnaire were administered to the parents of the pupils. School performance was found to be related with: father's educational level, father's employment, mother's educational level, number of siblings and mother's expectations for the child's future education. The mother's expectations for the child's future education were significantly related to her own educational level. School performance was correlated with housing density and the number of books at home. These two variables were also correlated with parents' educational level. In conclusion, the research showed that children's performance at school, reflects the social stratification of their families.