

# Parental Stress-Coping Skills and Resilience among Parents of Children with Specific Learning Disorders

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## ABSTRACT

**Objective:** Parental stress may affect parents' health, behavior, and children. The use of coping styles and resilience can help parents handle stress. The aim of this study was to examine the relationships between the demographic data, coping styles, resilience, and stress levels of the primary caregivers of children with Specific Learning Disorders (SLD)

**Methods:** 160 primary caregivers of children aged 6 to 17 with SLD who attended the Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Clinic at Siriraj Hospital were asked to complete the four-part questionnaire. The data were analyzed to find any correlations.

**Results:** 91.9% of participants had parenting stress at a typical stress level, and 68.8% were rated normal on the resilience quotient. With regard to coping style, the participants rated highest in problem-focus coping (mean score  $3.8 \pm 0.5$ ), followed by seeking social support ( $3.0 \pm 0.8$ ), and avoidance ( $2.3 \pm 0.6$ ). The score on the Parenting Stress Index correlated with social support ( $r = 0.207, p < 0.01$ ) and avoidance ( $r = 0.538, p < 0.01$ ). The resilience quotient score demonstrated a negative association with parenting stress ( $r = -0.291, p < 0.01$ ), emotional stability ( $r = -0.242, p < 0.01$ ), encouragement ( $r = -0.211, p < 0.01$ ), and problem-solving ( $r = -0.189, p < 0.05$ ).

**Conclusion:** Most of the parents had typical stress. Social support and avoidance -coping skills were significantly correlated with parenting stress and resilience. This suggests that one's coping style and resilience are crucial to parents' or primary caregivers' quality of life.

**Keywords:** Parenting stress; coping; resilience; specific learning disorders (Siriraj Med J 2021; 73: 38-45)

## INTRODUCTION

Specific Learning Disorder (SLD) is one of the neurodevelopmental disorders which can be identified from a demonstration of slower cognitive development in three areas: writing, reading, and math calculation, when compared to other children or those of the same age.<sup>1</sup> These three characteristics of SLD affect children significantly in their daily life, learning skills, and mental state, since these children can develop a negative feeling about their cognitive abilities.<sup>2</sup> According to several studies, children who are diagnosed with SLD will eventually

have lower psychosocial health, plus more anxiety and depression.<sup>3,4</sup> Ginieri-Coccosis et al.<sup>5</sup> have also concluded that children diagnosed with SLD have lower mental health, self-esteem, and relationship satisfaction. Moreover, it was found that the parents of SLD children also have a lower satisfaction with their environment and society at large. And these effects can also cause stress and sickness among parents and/or caretakers of children with SLD.<sup>6</sup>

Parenting stress is defined as distress as a result of the parental role, and is influenced by life events, environment, sociological factors, the child's characteristics,

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