Interpersonal support, emotional intelligence and family function in adolescence

Barragán Martín, A.B.
Molero Jurado, M.M.
Pérez-Fuentes, M.C.
Oropesa Ruiz, N.F.
Martos Martínez, Á.
Simón Márquez, M.M.
Gázquez Linares, J.J.

Abstract
Background: During adolescence, although the peer group exerts a strong influence on how the individual thinks and feels and on personal social values, the family still exerts a sustaining and supporting role. This study analyzed the relationships established between family function, emotional intelligence and perceived interpersonal support in adolescence. Method: The sample was made up of 1287 high school students aged 14 to 18 (M = 15.11; SD = 0.91) in the province of Almeria (Spain). Results: The results showed moderate correlations between the intrapersonal emotional intelligence dimension and perceived availability of support (advice or orientation), and between the mood dimension of emotional intelligence and the three interpersonal support dimensions (appraisal, belonging and tangible). In addition, significant positive correlations were found between family function and the intrapersonal and mood dimensions of emotional intelligence, with medium and large effect sizes, respectively. Apart from that, the data revealed that students who could count on a more functional family referred to high empathy and acceptance by others and greater support in material or financial matters, followed by those with moderate family function. In addition, students from homes with severely dysfunctional families perceived less available support. Finally, students who said they could count on strong family function also scored higher on the intrapersonal factor of emotional intelligence. Conclusions: The implications of these findings for the development of emotional intelligence in early adolescence are discussed from the family context, considering the relationship between emotional intelligence and social support.