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UNDERSTANDING PARENTING STYLES AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO DEPRESSION, ANXIETY AND STRESS IN GRADE 5 STUDENTS: ANALYTICAL CROSS SECTIONAL STUDY FROM THE KURUNEGALA DISTRICT

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INTRODUCTION
In Sri Lanka, grade 5 children sit for a highly competitive scholarship examination to get into the best schools in the country. This public examination is seen as an examination for parents due to their involvement. The cut-off marks to get popular schools are extremely high (close to 95%). Parenting styles are influential factors in children's development and mental well-being. However, their specific impact on depression, anxiety, and stress among children in Sri Lanka remains unclear.

OBJECTIVES
This study aimed to explore the correlation between parenting styles and mental health issues in grade 5 children in the Kurunegala district through an analytical cross-sectional study.

METHOD
Stratified sampling was used to identify schools. Data were collected using the Parenting Style Assessment Questionnaire (PSAQ) and the Depression Anxiety Stress-21 (DAS-21) scale. Sri Lanka College of Paediatricians granted ethical approval.

RESULTS
368 children aged between 9-10 years were assessed; 51.7% were males, and 48.3% females; 59.9% of fathers and 49.6% of mothers have not had education beyond the ordinary level. Monthly income was less than Rs. 50,000/= in 45.2% of the population.

30.7% screened positive for depression (mild-moderate depression 23.1%, severe depression 7.6%); 39.9% screened positive for anxiety (mild-moderate anxiety 19.1%, severe anxiety 20.9%); 29.6% screened positive for stress (mild-moderate stress 18.7%, severe stress 10.9%). Authoritative parenting was the most prevalent style (94.2%) followed by permissive, authoritarian, and neglectful styles.

Multiple regression analysis was used to identify correlations between depression, anxiety, and stress from parenting styles (authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, neglectful), duration of tuition, duration of studying at home, and monthly income. Only the permissive parenting style showed a negative statistical significance. Authoritarian, and neglectful parenting styles, duration of tuition, duration of studying at home and monthly income did show a statistically significant association.

CONCLUSIONS