

The University of Hong Kong
Department of Psychology

Departmental Seminar

The Role of Parents in Child Anxiety Disorders: Assessment Issues and Recent Evidence in Parent-Guided Cognitive Behavioural Therapy

Date: November 11, 2015 (Wednesday)
Time: 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Venue: Room 813, 8/F, The Jockey Club Tower, Centennial Campus, HKU
Speaker: Dr. Mandy Lau
University of Cambridge

Anxiety disorders are common among children and adolescents worldwide (Essau & Gabbidon, 2013). Theoretical models purport that parental behaviours have an important role in the development of child anxiety disorders. In this seminar, I will discuss 1) whether parenting behaviours differed across children and adolescents during observed puzzle tasks in a sample of young people with and without anxiety disorders ($n = 120$); 2) comparability of children's perceived and observer-reported parenting ($n = 69$); and 3) a UK-based randomised control trial of guided parent-delivered cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT) in the treatment of child anxiety disorders ($n = 194$). Study 1 showed that parents of adolescents with anxiety disorders were significantly less intrusive and less warmly engaged than parents of non-anxious adolescents. Yet, this pattern of findings was not observed in parents of children. Study 2 suggested that children's report of parenting may not be directly comparable to observed parenting. Study 3 showed that 50% anxious children (of non-anxious mothers) who received the parent-guided CBT treatment were free of their primary diagnoses, which was twice the rate that was observed in the wait-list control group. Together, these studies highlighted assessment issues (child age, measurement methodology) in researching parental behaviour, and evidenced the potential value in parent-guided CBT treatment for child anxiety.