

Parents with anxiety symptomatology engage in nonresponsive feeding, but longitudinal and observational studies are necessary to fully understand the impact of parent anxiety on feeding interactions.

INTRODUCTION

- Restrictive and controlling feeding practices are related to disinhibited child eating behaviors and unhealthy child weight status [1][2][3][4].
- Childhood overweight/obesity rates in the United States are alarmingly high [5][6][7].
- There is a pressing need to determine factors associated with maladaptive feeding behaviors.
- Anxiety disorders are the most common mental disorders among adults [8], yet little is known about parent anxiety’s effect on feeding behaviors [9].

Percentage of Children With and Without a Parent who has a Mental Illness [10]

Category	Percentage
Without a parent	80%
With a parent	20%

PURPOSE

- To synthesize data via a qualitative systematic review about the relationship between parent anxiety/anxious symptomatology and feeding behaviors in order to subsequently assist pediatric healthcare professionals in guiding parents with anxiety/anxious symptomatology towards effective feeding practices.

METHODS

Creation of Foundational & Extensive Keyword Sets

Creation of Inclusion & Exclusion Criteria

Extraction of Sources from PubMed & APA PsycInfo

First Screening Round of Sources (Based on Titles + Abstracts) using Rayyan QCRI [11]

Second Screening Round of Sources (Based on Full-Texts) using Rayyan QCRI [11]

Data Extraction from All Included Sources

- The PRISMA model was utilized since it is an exemplar evidence-based system developed for relaying results from systematic reviews [12].
- The foundational keyword categories are “Parents,” “Anxiety,” “Children,” and “Feeding.”
- The keywords were expanded using MeSH and DE (thesaurus terms) for PubMed and APA PsycInfo, respectively.
- All screening was conducted via Rayyan QCRI (<https://rayyan.qcri.org/>) [11], a web-based application that assists researchers with screening sources for systematic reviews.

METHODS

Inclusion Criteria

- Normally developing children 6 months or older (after the introduction of solid food)
- Discussion of feeding behaviors utilized by parents with anxiety disorder/symptoms
- Primary, empirical, English, peer-reviewed journal articles

Exclusion Criteria

- Children younger than 6 months
- Focus on:
 - Breastfeeding
 - Bottle feeding
 - Causes of anxiety
 - Prenatal and postpartum anxiety
 - Eating or feeding disorders
 - Other medical conditions

RESULTS

After independent and blind screening rounds of n = 925 total articles, n = 10 articles were included for data extraction based on study design, goal, results, and limitations.

Among n = 10 included articles, 7 articles show an association between parent anxiety and nonresponsive feeding behaviors.

Left Pie Chart: Results of n = 10 included sources

Right Pie Chart: Results of 7 articles

Category	Percentage
Studies show parent anxiety is associated with restrictive, controlling, and nonresponsive feeding behaviors	70%
Studies show no relationship between parent anxiety and specific feeding behaviors	30%

Category	Percentage
Studies show parent anxiety is associated with restrictive feeding behaviors only when anxiety is coexisting with other mental health symptomatology	50%
Studies show that parent anxiety, on its own, is associated with nonresponsive feeding behaviors	10%
Study shows that parent anxiety is associated with a weak prediction of restrictive feeding behaviors	10%
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- Studies show no relationship between parent anxiety and specific feeding behaviors
- Studies show parent anxiety is associated with restrictive, controlling, and nonresponsive feeding behaviors
- Study shows parent anxiety is associated with restrictive feeding behaviors only when anxiety is coexisting with other mental health symptomatology
- Studies show that parent anxiety, on its own, is associated with nonresponsive feeding behaviors
- Study shows that parent anxiety is associated with a weak prediction of restrictive feeding behaviors

There is a lack of consensus among current studies about the strength of relationship between parent anxiety and nonresponsive feeding behaviors.

DISCUSSION

- This is the only review that focuses solely on the relationship between parent anxiety and feeding behaviors.
- Most sources in this review indicate that parent anxiety is associated with restrictive and controlling feeding behaviors.
 - These are known as nonresponsive [9] and obesogenic feeding behaviors [13].
- Support should be provided for parents with anxiety or symptoms of anxiety to promote children’s development of optimal eating behaviors.
- Common limitations of studies include:
 - Self-report surveys instead of observational research
 - Cross-sectional instead of longitudinal studies
 - Only mothers in the sample
- Future studies should conduct longitudinal parent-child mealtime observations to:
 - Objectively determine whether there is a causal relationship between parent anxiety and nonresponsive feeding.
 - Assess the strength of contribution that parent anxiety presents towards parents’ use of nonresponsive feeding behaviors.

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Correspondence: rrsampige@uh.edu