

Altered maternal psychological profile as health risk factor in poor urban infants

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To test the hypothesis that the increased health risk of children selected by a previously calculated and validated predictive model is associated with some maternal psychological characteristics, the universe of 107 mothers of children selected by this model was evaluated by means of Goldberg's General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-30), Raven (Ra) and Rorschach (Ro) tests; 37.4% were cases according to GHQ-30, 80.9% were <50th percentile in Ra and 85% exhibited deviant responses in Ro tests. Children whose mother's IQ was <50th percentile suffered more episodes of total morbidity (Tm) and of diarrhoea ($p = 0.0364$). Children whose mothers were normal in Ro had less Tm ($p = 0.0364$) and fewer respiratory symptoms ($p = 0.0300$) and tended to have less diarrhoea ($p = 0.0690$). In poor urban families in Santiago psychological maternal characteristics are associated with an increased health risk for the infants. Supportive programmes should consider both biological characteristics of the infants a