

Are anxious parents unconsciously ‘teaching’ their kids to be stressed out?

Children were more likely to be diagnosed with an anxiety disorder when a parent of the same sex, rather than one of the opposite sex, had the condition, a cross-sectional study from Canada found.

The lifetime likelihood of an anxiety disorder diagnosis in offspring was nearly three times higher when a parent of the same sex had anxiety, but no significant association was observed when it was a parent of the opposite sex, reported Barbara Pavlova, PhD, of Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and colleagues in [JAMA Network Open](#).

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“The sex-specific pattern is particularly pronounced when looking at parents who reside with their children,” the researchers wrote. For example, kids living with a same-sex parent not affected by anxiety were 62% less likely to be diagnosed with the disorder (OR 0.38, 95% CI 0.22-0.67, $P=0.001$).

Pavlova’s group added that the findings suggest environmental factors, such as modeling and “vicarious learning,” likely have a role in the intergenerational transmission of anxiety.

“Future studies should establish whether treating parents’ anxiety may protect their children from developing an anxiety disorder,” the researchers concluded.

[**This is an excerpt. Read the original post here**](#)