

## Coping Strategies of Parents of a Child with Asthma in Relation to the Child's Disease

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**Abstract :** Background: Asthma is one of the most common chronic diseases in children, which can significantly affect children, and challenge their families. The unpredictability, frequency, and control of asthma attacks have a profound effect on the daily lives of families with asthmatic children. There is a growing body of research showing that the quality of life of parents and children is linked to the development of asthma. Theoretical and clinical studies prove that a positive and well-functioning family system helps to cope better with the diagnosis of the chronic disease. The aim of the research was to describe the coping strategies of parents of a child with asthma concerning the child's illness. Method: The research was an empirical, quantitative, descriptive study. The sample was the parents of a child with asthma at the Tallinn Children's Hospital, whose child was in inpatient treatment between 07.04.2021 and 12.09.2021. This is a convenient sample. 59 parents replied to the questionnaire. The questionnaire "Coping Inventory for Stressful Situations" was used to collect the data, which was translated into Estonian and Russian using a back-and-forth translation technique. The questionnaire was answered on a 5-point Likert scale. Data analysis was performed using SPSS 26.0, descriptive statistics, with mean values and standard deviation. The Mann-Whitney U test was used to compare fathers and mothers' coping strategies. Permission to conduct research has been obtained from the Ethics Committee for Human Research of the Institute for Health Development. Results: The mean age of the respondents was  $40 \pm 6.2$  years (median 40), with the youngest being 27 years old and the oldest being 57 years old. Of the respondents, 51 (86.4%) were mothers, and 8 (13.6%) were fathers. Parents used the most task-oriented coping strategies (mean  $3.35 \pm 0.602$ ) and the least emotion-oriented coping strategies (mean  $1.97 \pm 0.526$ ). Mothers used more task-oriented coping strategies ( $p = 0.001$ ) than fathers. Fathers used emotion-oriented coping strategies less ( $p = 0.024$ ) than mothers. Mothers plan their time better ( $p = 0.043$ ), focus on the problem and look at how to solve it ( $p = 0.007$ ), and make an effort to get things done ( $p = 0.045$ ). Mothers blame themselves more for not knowing what to do ( $p = 0.045$ ) and worry about what they should do ( $p = 0.027$ ). Mothers look more at the goods displayed in the shop windows ( $p = 0.018$ ) and go for a walk ( $p = 0.007$ ) compared to fathers. Conclusions: The results of the research showed that problem-oriented coping strategies are used the most and there are differences in the behavior of fathers and mothers. This should be taken into account when providing family-centered nursing care.

**Keywords :** asthma, coping strategies, parents, family

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