

**What Characteristics Are Associated With Good Versus Poor
Parenting Outcomes Amongst Parents Living With Psychotic
Disorders: A Confirmatory Factor Analysis**

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Statement of Originality

The thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. I give consent for the final version of my thesis being made available worldwide when deposited in the University's Digital Repository**, subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968.

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Statement of Authorship

I hereby certify that the work embodied in this thesis contains a manuscript submitted for publication, of which I am a joint author. Below is a written statement, endorsed by my supervisors, attesting to my contribution to the joint publication.

Linda Campbell conceived of the research questions, participated in the design of the current study, and undertook some of the statistical analyses. Don and Scott Brown participated in the design of the current study, and undertook the statistical analyses. Donald Van Ravenzwaaij, Scott Brown and Linda Campbell interpreted the data, considered the implications of the study and drafted the manuscript. All other authors assisted with the writing of the manuscript, contributed to the interpretation and the implications of the findings and approved the final manuscript.

This publication is based on data collected in the framework of the 2010 Australian National Survey of High Impact Psychosis. The members of the Survey of High Impact Psychosis Study Group are: V. Morgan (National Project Director), A. Jablensky (Chief Scientific Advisor), A. Waterreus (National Project Coordinator), R. Bush, V. Carr, D. Castle, M. Cohen, C. Galletly, C. Harvey, B. Hocking, A. Mackinnon, P. McGorry, J. McGrath, A. Neil, S. Saw and H. Stain. Ethics approvals for the study were obtained from the relevant institutional human research ethics committees.

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Structured abstract

Scope: Parenthood is central to most adult people's personal and social identity. For many people with psychotic disorders, parenthood is associated with formidable challenges that, for some, are difficult to overcome. Some of these challenges are present prior to the onset of the psychotic disorder, yet others occur as a consequence of the disorder. Many of these challenges are associated with social disadvantage that would make it difficult to parent with or without a psychotic disorder. Others are more directly associated with disorder itself such as problematic symptoms and decreased level of functioning. Whilst some parents with psychotic disorder manage well in their parenting, others have problems that can result in poor parent-child relationships and/or loss of custody.

Purpose: The current study aimed to identify latent variables predictive of good enough parenting outcome amongst a representative sample of parents with psychotic disorders.

Methodology: The second Australian national survey used a two-phase design to include a catchment population of 1.5 million people aged 18-64 (Morgan et al., 2012). In the first phase people who attended services that support people with mental illness, such as public mental health services and non-government organisations, were screened for psychosis during the census month (March, 2010). Of those participants who screened positive (N= 7955), a randomised sample stratified by age group was chosen and asked to consider participation in the study. Thereafter, in the second phase a total of 1825 people were interviewed and assessed. Out of these participants, data pertaining to 234 parents living with dependent children were included in the current analysis. Parenting outcome was operationalized as quality of care of children (last 12 months). Five latent variables were constructed, using a hypothesis-driven approach from contemporary literature, and labelled psychosocial support, illness severity, substance abuse/dependence, adaptive functioning and parenting role. The data were analysed using a confirmatory factor analysis.

Results: Importantly, seventy-five per cent of participants were not identified as having any parenting dysfunction in the last 12 months (outcome variable). Out of five hypothesised latent variables, severity of illness and adaptive functioning were found to be reliably associated with the outcome variable. Meanwhile, neither the latent variables psychosocial functioning, substance abuse/dependence nor parenting role was found to be related to the

outcome variable although the variables did have an indirect relationship via their association with either severity of illness and/or adaptive functioning.

General conclusions: Whilst the majority of the participants were functioning adequately well in their parenting role, for those parents who were not doing well, increased symptom severity and decreased adaptive functioning presented significant difficulties.

Implications: Many parents with psychosis are in need of assistance to manage their parenting obligations. However, it is important to consider that symptoms and functioning can change episodically and therefore it is vital to have targeted and flexible support that can temporarily assist in times of need to improve not only parenting outcomes but also maximise child outcomes.

Keywords: Mental health, parents, psychosis, quality of care.