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Comune di Milazzo



Ordine degli Psicologi  
della Regione Siciliana



**SESSION 3:**  
**CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY**

## **PAIN IN CHILDREN: ARE EMOTIONAL PROFILES RELATED TO COPING ASPECTS?**

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The aim of this study was to understand how children manage pain. We assessed their emotional and coping aspects in regards to pain. The collection of the data sample of this project was from May 2012 to December 2014. From this data it will be possible to get a new direction to develop innovative interventions for the relief of pain.

A sample of 37 children (22m;15f) between 7 and 14 years: gr.1 7-10yrs (22); gr.2 11-14yrs (15); M=10.1,ds=2.3; from the Paediatric Units of Trento and Rovereto. The considered diseases are oncological (N=20) and rheumatic (N=17).The study protocol included the acquisition of 2 aspects (emotional and coping strategies) of pain by using the following tools:

- Paediatric Pain Coping Inventory (questionnaire)
- Projective Drawings Technique (Person, Family, Tree)
- Short interview and observation

Coping abilities of pain management do not change significantly between the two age groups as well as between the various pathologies, but the Social support (e.g. staying with parents, among peers, physical contact) is the is the strategy used most often. However, the time from the diagnosis affects the access to the strategies (especially the Cognitive ones) and change between the various pathologies. All coping strategies gain in effectiveness from diagnosis, but after the two-year mark, their effectiveness decreases progressively.

When analyzing the emotional profiles, we found that children with cancer are more injured than the rheumatic children. The family support is an important factor to improve the Distraction strategies. In all projective tests, the males represented themselves less adequate compared to females regardless of age.