

Carr, S.N., & Francis, A.J.P. (2010). Do early maladaptive schemas mediate the relationship between childhood experiences and avoidant personality disorder features? A preliminary investigation in a non-clinical sample. *Cognitive Therapy and Research*, 34, 343-358.

The current study tested the hypothesis that early maladaptive schemas (EMSs) mediate the relationship between retrospectively reported childhood experiences and avoidant personality disorder (AVPD) symptoms. One hundred and seventy-eight non-clinical participants completed questionnaires measuring retrospectively reported childhood experiences, a measure of EMSs, and AVPD symptoms. Path analyses showed that the EMSs of subjugation, abandonment, and emotional inhibition fully mediated the relationship between retrospectively reported childhood experiences (specifically mother overprotection & family sociability) and AVPD symptoms. The abandonment and subjugation EMSs were found to fully mediate the relationship between family sociability and AVPD symptoms while the subjugation and emotional inhibition EMSs fully mediated the relationship between mother (but not father) overprotection and AVPD symptoms. Finally, retrospective reports of childhood maltreatment were found to be associated with all EMSs within the disconnection/rejection domain apart from the abandonment EMS although these EMSs did not significantly account for AVPD symptoms. These results are consistent with cognitive-behavioural formulations of personality disorders and this study is the first to show that EMSs mediate the relationship between childhood factors and AVPD features.