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## A Genetically-Informed Test of the Biopsychosocial Theory of Borderline Personality Disorder: Informant and Sex Effects

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### ABSTRACT:

Background: Parent-child transactions are at the heart of the biopsychosocial theory of borderline personality disorder (BPD). However, few studies have examined the longitudinal, bidirectional relationship between BPD and parenting factors, and fewer still have attempted to differentiate reciprocal causation from common genetic liabilities.

Methods: We used a longitudinal, genetically informed design consisting of mixed-sex monozygotic, dizygotic, and adoptive sibling pairs (n = 4996, 52.7% female) followed longitudinally from age 14 to 17. We examined the developmental patterns of BPD traits (Minnesota Borderline Personality Scale) and parenting factors (parent-child conflict and involvement, Parental Environment Questionnaire), as well as gene-environment correlations and causal effects across child sex and informant.

Results: Longitudinal direction of causation models indicated bidirectional influences between all three ratings of parenting (child, mother, and father) and BPD traits across child sex. At both age 14 and 17, BPD traits and parenting factors showed high genetic correlations across sex and informants.

Conclusions: The heritability of parenting is in large part accounted for by genetic factors on BPD. However, there is evidence of reciprocal causation between BPD traits and parenting factors as well. Together, these results provide some support for the biopsychosocial theory of BPD while highlighting the role of person-environment correlations.

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