

Psychological study of adaptation and developmental processes to radioactive contamination from the Fukushima nuclear accident.

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Background

- It is very urgent task for us to protect Fukushima children from psychological disaster.
 - As indicated our data, children are psychologically damaged by ongoing radioactive contamination.
 - Even for very young children, negative influences can be observed.

Research model

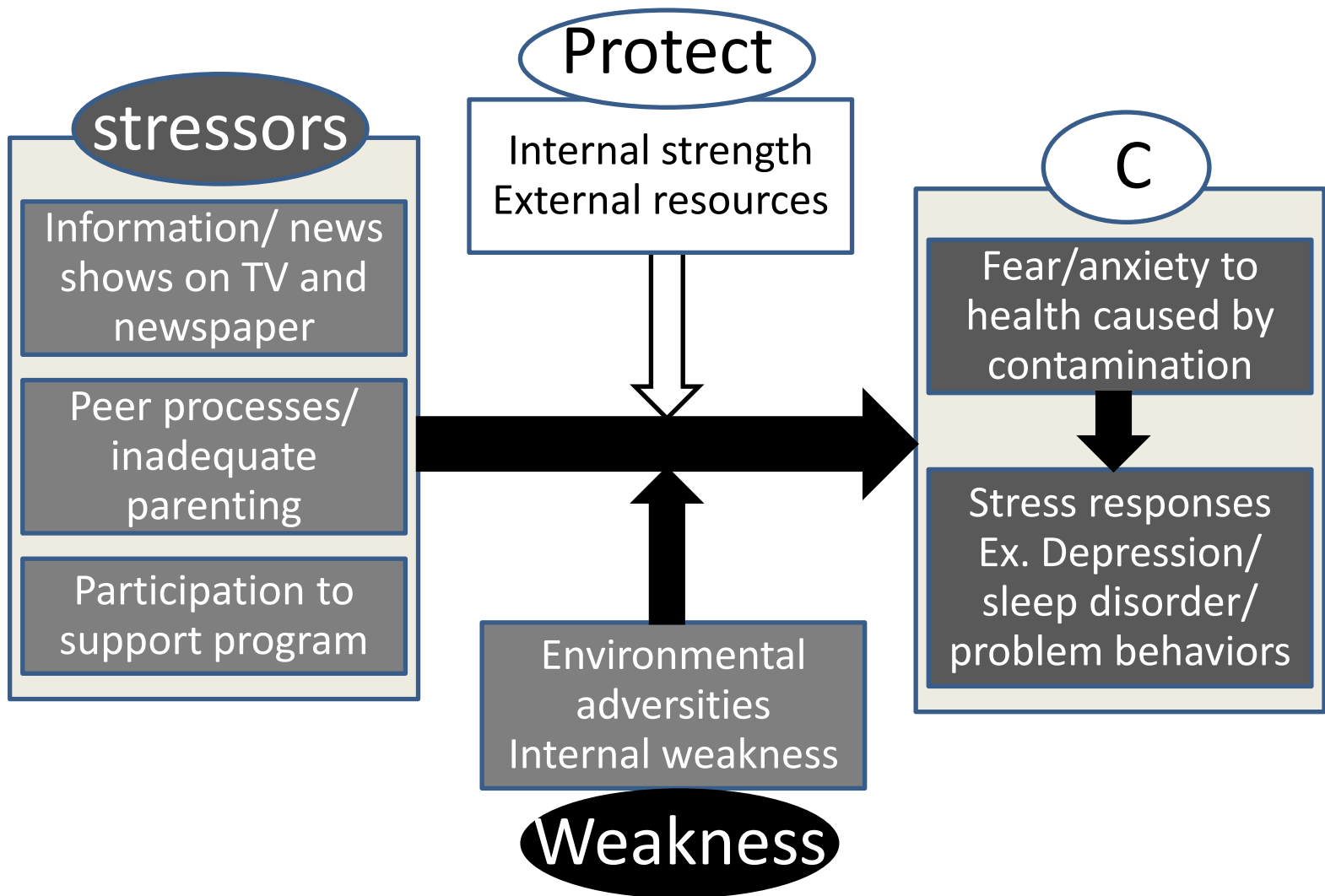
- To help children's recovery from psychological damage, and to support children's getting back psychological wellness and peace, we need to understand how psychological damages break out in children.
- We plan three research projects.
 - To test a dual impact pathway model.
 - To investigate how to support vulnerable children.
 - To investigate how to reduce parental stress.

Dual impact pathways

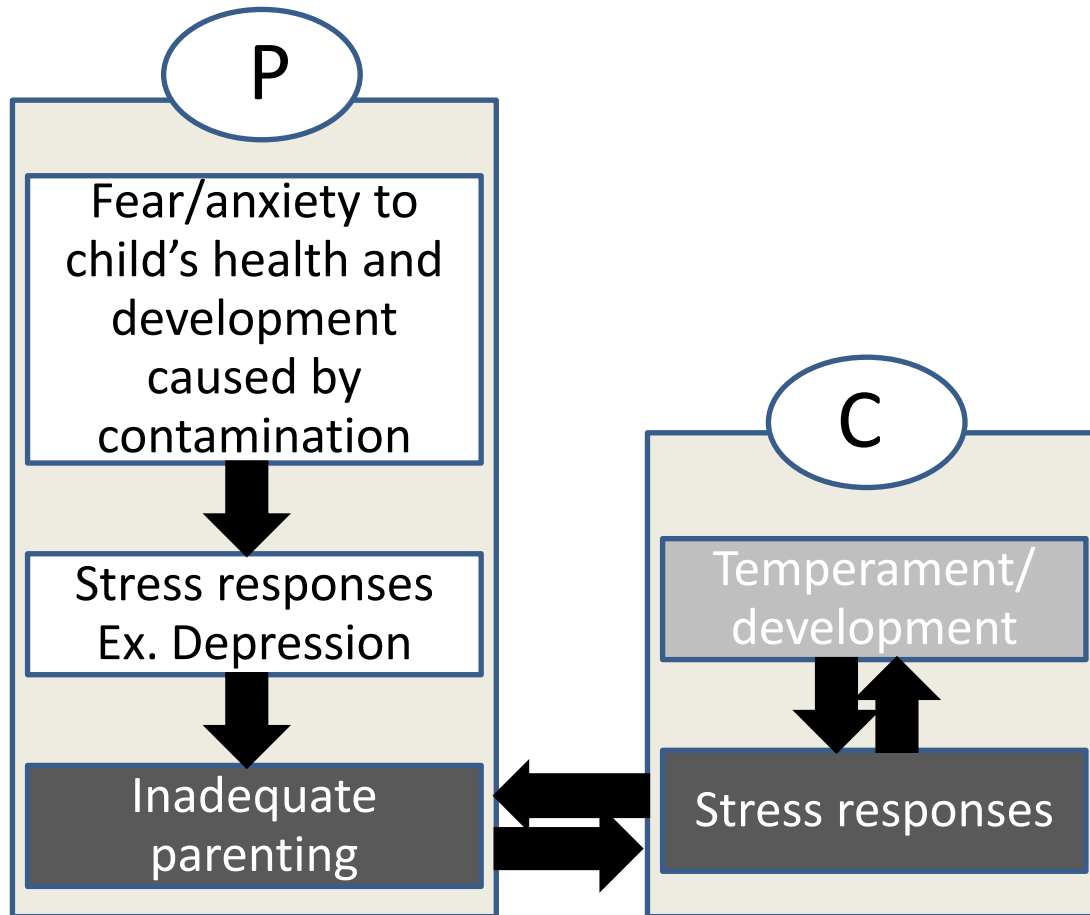
- Psychological damages come from dual pathways.
 - Direct impact: Children have been suffered directly, because children can feel anxiety and fear from prospective risks on their physical health, just like their parents do.
 - Indirect impact: Children have suffered via parental problems. Parental anxiety and fear on children's health and development hurts their sensitive parenting and protective powers for children.

Developmental perspectives

- The mechanism of psychological damages would differ by children's ages and timing of development.
 - In older children, both pathways would work.
 - Contrary, in young children, indirect pathway would have serious impact on their health and development, because their health and development depends on parenting, such as security of attachment.



Direct impact pathways model



Indirect impact pathways model

How support vulnerable children?

- It needs special consideration to children who have genetic vulnerability.
- They have been damaged more serious than children without such vulnerability.
- Through child psychiatric and psychological investigation, to develop specific support system for children with genetically vulnerability.

How to reduce parental stress?

- To protect children from psychological disaster, we need to understand how to reduce parental stress.
- But we do not have any effective knowledge.
 - Attempts of risk communication by scientific professions and government, in which told safety, have failed.
- What can we do?

Learn from “resilient” people

- Our data imply us,
 - On average, the level of anxiety/fear have declined.
 - However, the variance rather increased.
 - Some people succeed to reduce the level of anxiety/fear, but some people maintain serious level of anxiety/fear.
- We can learn very useful knowledge from investigation to compare the two groups.

Stress level

High

Low

Explosion of
nuclear plant

2013

What factors
play to reduce
people's stress
level?

What factors hinder
to reduce people's
stress level?

differentiation

