**BACKGROUND**

Researchers have shown that children’s externalizing problems (delinquency and aggression) and parents’ abusive parenting are bidirectional based on the transactional model and social coercion model. However, their specific findings are not consistent depending on the design of the studies (Huh, 2006; Reitz, 2006). Potential reasons could be the different reporters of parenting and children’s behaviors and age of the children.

**PURPOSES**

This study explored the potential influences of reporter and age on the bidirectional relationships between adolescents’ externalizing problems and their mothers’ psychological aggression.

**METHOD**

The sample came from the National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-being (NSCAW I & II). The sample represents a population of adolescents who received Child Protective Services investigation for possible maltreatment. The current study includes 591 youth (318 11 to 12 years old and 273 13 to 14 years old). Both mothers and youth responded to the same measures on psychological aggression (Parent-Child Conflict Tactics Scale, Straus et al., 1998) and externalizing problems (Youth Self Report/Child Behavior Checklist, Achenbach, 1991) across three time points. Descriptive, t-test, correlation analysis, and cross-lagged panel models were conducted.

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**CONCLUSIONS**

- The two reporters tended to agree more as adolescents aged. Researchers may have to consider using parent-reports for early adolescents in ages 11 ~ 12, but youth self-reports might be as valid as parent-reports for older adolescents.
- The transactional process between parents and children could be different by age of the child.
- The effects of reporters are not evident in longitudinal relationships. Shared variance problems are more problematic for cross-sectional relationships.