

University of Maryland Baltimore Graduate School

Announcement of Doctoral Dissertation Defense*

Candidate: Otima Z. Doyle

Date, Time, and Place: April 18, 2008, 1:30pm, Room 5E11, School of Social Work

Dissertation Title: African American Youth and their Fathers: Exploring the Relationship between Perceived Nurturance and Psychological Well-Being

Dissertation Abstract**:

Increasing interest in fatherhood is fueled by a growing public awareness of the direct and indirect effect that men can have on the economic, physical, and psychological well-being of children (Day & Lamb, 2004). Despite recent agreement regarding the salience of cultural variation (Lamb & Tamis-Lemonda, 2004) much of the literature focuses on middle-class, European Americans (Coll et al., 1996; Rohner & Khaleque, 2005; Smetana, Metzger, & Campione-Barr, 2004). The purpose of this dissertation is to contribute to the growing body of literature related to African American fathers and their children. The first objective is to identify factors that are predictive of father nurturance. The second objective is to investigate whether youths' perceptions of father nurturance during childhood and adolescence (birth to 18) predict their current level of psychological well-being. Parental acceptance/rejection theory (Rohner, 1986; Rohner & Khaleque, 2005) is used to guide the objectives in this study.

Data were collected from 264, 18-25 year old African American college students. Participants completed a self-administered survey consisting of demographic questions and four scales: The Parental Acceptance/Rejection Questionnaire (Rohner & Khaleque, 2005), the Nurturant Fathering Scale (Finley & Schwartz, 2004), The Personality Assessment Questionnaire Rohner & Khaleque, 2005), and the Sources of Social Support Scale (Friedman, Koeske, Silvestre, Korr, & Sites, 2006).

Overall, those who interacted more frequently and over longer periods of time (from birth to 18) with their identified father have higher perceptions of father nurturance. Those whose mothers and identified fathers were married or cohabitating and those who perceived greater levels of mother nurturance have higher levels of psychological well-being. The predictive nature of mother nurturance is consistent with Rohner and Khaleque's (2005) claim that parental nurturance is universally and positively associated with youth psychological well-being. The fathers' contribution to psychological well-being is demonstrated through the the marital (or cohabitating) relationship between the mother and the identified father and psychological well-being. The combination of findings related to father nurturance (non significant) and married parents (significant) may reflect the multifaceted and culturally constructed nature of the fatherhood role (Lamb & Tamis-Lemoda, 2004).

Dissertation Committee Chair (name and title):

Ed Pecukonis, Ph.D., Associate Professor and Director of the Center for Maternal and Child Health Social Work Education

Dissertation Committee Members (names and titles):

Geoffrey Greif, Ph.D., Professor, University of Maryland, Baltimore

Donna Harrington, Ph.D., Professor and Doctoral Program Directory, University of Maryland, Baltimore

Waldo Johnson, Jr., Ph.D., Associate Professor and Director, Center for the Study of Race, Politics and Culture, University of Chicago

Michael Lindsey, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, School of Social Work & School of Medicine, University of Maryland

The Open Presentation is open to the university community and invitees of the candidate. Any member of the Graduate Faculty may observe the Final Examination. Only committee members may vote. For more information, see **Procedures for Examination of the Doctoral Dissertation.*

***You must type your abstract on this form in the space provided.*

Updated: February 24, 2006