

SEQUENTIAL ANALYSIS OF PARENT-ADOLESCENT INTERACTIONS AS A
FUNCTION OF ADOLESCENT DEPRESSIVE SYMPTOMS

ASHLEY Q. PINEDA

Thesis under the direction of Professor David A. Cole

In this study 2 reinforcement models were tested to examine whether adolescent depressive behaviors are positively or negatively reinforced by mothers in families with a depressed adolescent. Seventy-two adolescents (14-18 years old) and their mothers completed questionnaires and participated in a 10-minute conversational interaction for this study. The reinforcement models were tested using sequential analyses of the videotaped parent-adolescent interactions. Although no support was found for either reinforcement model, several notable findings emerged. First, adolescents reporting higher levels of depression were more likely to exhibit depressive behaviors during interactions with their parents than adolescents reporting lower levels of depression. Second, parents of relatively depressed adolescents generally provided lower rates of positive parenting than did parents of nondepressed adolescents. Third, parents of relatively depressed adolescents were less likely to respond to their adolescents' depressive affect and behavior with supportive parenting than were parents of nondepressed adolescents.