

## The effects of foster parents' experienced difficulties, psychological immune competency, and parenting style on burnout

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**Introduction:** To receive appropriate support, foster children need emotionally supportive foster parents who are well prepared to overcome the emerging problems during their work. If these problems overwhelm their personal and social resources, they will be at risk for burnout. The consequences of burnout could negatively affect their work, namely supporting the adequate development of the children in care.

**Aim:** To examine the foster parents' perceived difficulties, personal resources, parenting styles, and their effects on burnout.

**Methodology:** 253 foster parents from five Hungarian counties participated in this cross-sectional study. Their mean of age was 43,65 (SD=9,59) years. Participants were asked to answer demographical questions, the Psychological Immune Competency Inventory (PICI), the Mini Oldenburg Inventory (MOLBI), the Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire (PSDQ), and a self-conducted questionnaire regarding their difficulties.

**Findings:** Five main categories of the difficulties were identified: Problems with the children, Obligations, Problems with the welfare system, Personal difficulties, and Losing the children. Apart from the latter, these difficulties showed weak, positive correlation with burnout. Regarding parenting styles, burnout correlated positively with the authoritarian parenting style and negatively with authoritative parenting style. Foster parents with better psychological immune system seemed to have lower level of burnout. To examine the complex relationship among the previously mentioned variables, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was used. Psychological immune competency demonstrated a direct negative effect on burnout, but it also manifested indirect effects by supporting warm parenting style and weakening the effect of difficulties.

**Conclusion:** By improving psychological immune competency, foster parents might experience their difficulties less overwhelming, could create a warmer, but consequent parenting approach, and they could have a decreased chance for burning out.

### Biography

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