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BEING A FATHER DURING THE SPACE CAREER: RETIRED COSMONAUTS' INVOLVEMENT

**Abstract**

The space career required numerous absences from the cosmonaut's family during training and spaceflight. Such absences meant missing important milestones, events, and celebrations in the lives of their children. The purpose is to assess retired cosmonauts' involvement with their children, noting what their involvement was and what they would have liked it to have been during their career. Method: The Father Involvement Scale (adapted from Finley Schwartz, 2004; Hawkins et al., 2002), translated into Russian, was answered by 17 retired cosmonauts. The 20 domains in the scale included 10 Expressive (e.g., intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual development; sharing activities and interests) and 10 Instrumental (e.g., providing income, being protective, discipline, school/homework, and developing responsibility, independence, and competence). Results: The cosmonauts' ratings of actual involvement with their children's lives was between Sometimes involved and Often involved ( $M = 3.66$ ,  $SD = 0.42$ ). None of the cosmonauts indicated Never involved for any of the Expressive domains or for seven of the ten Instrumental domains. Within the Expressive domains, the majority of cosmonauts said they were "often involved" in their child's spiritual development and in sharing activities/ interests. Within the Instrumental domains, they were "always" or "often" involved in providing income and discipline. The areas in which they wished they had been "much more involved" were: intellectual, spiritual, and physical development; sharing interests/ activities, and companionship. These fit into the category of "expressive" rather than "instrumental". On a scale of 0-100, the cosmonauts rated their children as very supportive (94.33) of their career. Conclusions: In looking back at their space career, retired cosmonauts assessed their level of involvement with their children, and indicated that they would have liked to have been much more involved. The Expressive domains were the ones that they felt they had not been as involved as they would have liked to have been. This is the first study to identify father involvement for spacefarers during their careers. Identifying the domains of father involvement that are important for cosmonauts is the first step. Creating ways for future spacefarers to enhance their involvement with the help of Family Support personnel at the space agencies is the next step.