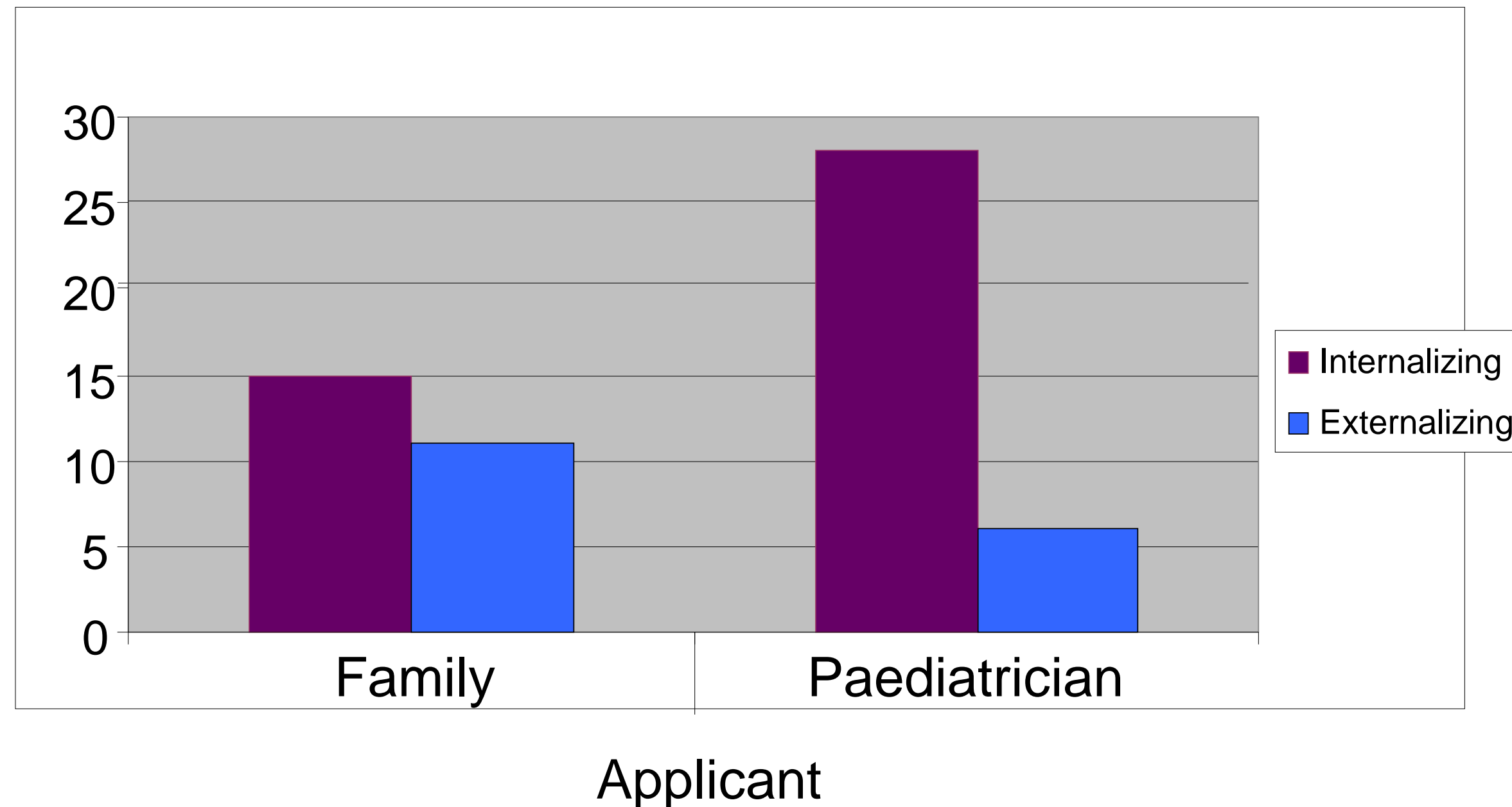


# Mental Health problems in a Primary Care Paediatric Consultation

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## Introduction

Coinciding with the rotation of a psychologist (Psychologist Training Programme); we carried out a descriptive and exploratory research about the characteristic of Mental Health (MH) consultations.



## Methods

Data were collected over a period of 6 weeks. Variables: sociodemographic (age, gender, parental age, cohabitation, number of siblings and birth order among siblings) characteristics of consultations (problem-normality Table 1, initial reason for the visit, person who demand for attention and referral).

INTERNALIZING	EXTERNALIZING	MIXED
Depression	Attention deficit disorder-Hyperactivity	Social problems
Anxiety	Antisocial behavior	Problems thinking
Social withdrawal	Aggression problems	Language problems
Somatic complaints	Antisocial behavior	

**Table 1 DIMENSIONAL CLASSIFICATION**  
Achenbach and Edelbrock

## Results

20% of the total consultations were related to Mental Health problems, 23.3% of which were developmental problems. The most common type of patient was: boy (60,5%, vs 39.5% of girls) with a internalizing problem (61,6%). Relatives demand attention in 50% of the cases and paediatrician detected 44% of the cases. 85% of the cases did not require referral to mental health services. Only in 26.7% of the cases the initial reason for the visit was the mental health problem but it comes up during other consultations (for another health problem 34, 9%, for a related health problem 14% and a, 20% during regular medical checkups). Relations between variables: boys present more externalizing problems than girls ( $X^2=7.6$ ;  $p<0,05$ ); when there is a problem is mainly the pediatrician who detects it. Most of the family mental health problems demands were related to normal developmental difficulties ( $X^2=7,4$ ;  $p<0,05$ ) Graphic 1. Paediatrician detected more internalizing problems ( $X^2=4.4$ ;  $p<0,05$ ).

## Conclusions

1. MH problems consultations are very common in primary care (20%).
2. Primary care paediatricians are the first step in detecting and attending mental health problems in children.
3. The well-child visit Schedule can be a great time for early detection
4. Developmental problems are the most frequent causes of mental health consultation in primary care and only in a few cases referred to a specialist is needed

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