

Trajectories of violence: abuse during pregnancy and parental practices in very young children

Almeida, Clementina Pires – BabyLab, FPCE – Universidade de Coimbra; Sá, Eduardo – BabyLab, FPCE- Universidade Coimbra; Martins, Mariana Lemos - BabyLab, FPCE – Universidade de Coimbra; Neiva, Susana – UFP, Porto - BabyLab, FPCE – Universidade de Coimbra

Objective

The objective of this study was to evaluate the relationship between violence during pregnancy and parenting practices in very young children, and the impact of those practices in babies mental and social development at 3.5 months and 12 months old.

Method

As instruments we selected the Griffiths Mental Development Scales 0-2 years (Griffiths, 2006), the Conflict Tactic Scale 2 (CTS2, Strauss, ???), Brief Infant Toddler Social Emotional Assessment (BITSEA, Gowan, Carter 2006) and the Parent Behavior Checklist (PBC, Fox, 1994).

Introduction

Evidence shows that domestic violence potentially interfere negatively in the parenting process as a result of lower emotional readiness, leading to real change in the quality of parent-child relationships, reflected in the adoption of less capable parental styles. (Calheiros&Monteiro, 2007). An especially concerning form of abuse is the one that occurs during pregnancy.

violence against women is a global problem with a high risk of suffering on millions of women and families, including women who are pregnant and postpartum pregnancy (Martin, Arcara & Pollock, 2011) and is characterized by major changes in women’s physical and psychological levels. Recent researches have been proving that these changes and the environmental context in which the household is directly influence the babies’ development in prenatal and postnatal periods and the dynamics of parents-children relationships.

Participants

204 pregnant women from the routine prenatal consultation at the obstetrician and gynecology service at Pedro-Hispano, Hospital in Matosinhos / Porto Portugal, participated in this study. They had an average of 29 years of age, with more than 25 weeks of gestation and Portuguese nationality. Later also participated in the study their babies at 3.5 months and 12 months of age.

Results

In this study we found that 107 (58.2%) pregnant women were victims of abuse by their partners. With regard to parenting practices we found that these women exhibit more aggressive behavior suggesting the more use of punitive practices (physical or verbal), report lower expectations regarding her child’s competence/development, nevertheless showed the same positive behaviors of affection. When we consider the mental development in regards to parental behaviors adopted, we found that high expectations, as well as high punitive behaviors are related to low mental development in babies at one year of age, while high positive affect behaviors promote high mental development babies at one year of age.

		codificação em vítima e não vítima			
		não vítima		vítima	
		N	(%)	N	(%)
Expectations subscale scores records	+12 lower extreme	6	(14.0)	4	(10.3)
	12 well below average	0	(0.0)	1	(2.6)
	15-23 average	12	(27.9)	12	(30.8)
	24-37 well above average	9	(20.9)	10	(25.6)
	+37 upper extreme	16	(37.2)	12	(30.8)
Discipline Subscale scores records	+10 well below average	2	(4.7)	3	(7.7)
	10-22 average	14	(33.6)	9	(23.1)
	23-31 well above average	20	(46.5)	21	(53.8)
	+31 upper extreme	7	(16.3)	6	(15.4)
Nurturing Subscale scores records	+10 lower extreme	4	(9.3)	2	(5.1)
	10-22 well below average	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)
	23-37 average	7	(16.3)	6	(15.4)
	38-40 well above average	4	(9.3)	1	(2.6)
	+40 upper extreme	28	(65.1)	30	(76.9)

Conclusion

This study concluded that violence during pregnancy tends to affect the strategies and parenting styles chosen, and those were demonstrated to have direct impact on mental and social development of babies at one year of age.

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