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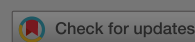
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A prospective study of the parent-baby bond in men and women 15 months after birth

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Abstract

Objective: To prospectively examine the impact of parental mental health (PTSD, depression and anxiety), the couple's relationship quality and the infant temperament on the parent-baby bond in first-time mothers and fathers. **Background:** Evidence suggests that poor parental mental health, difficult infant temperament and/or lower quality of the couple's relationship may impede the parent-baby bond. However, little

research has examined the parent-baby bond in first-time fathers. **Methods:** 75 women and 75 men were recruited to the study at 3 and 15 months postpartum. The parent-baby bond was measured using the Parent-Infant Bonding Scale (P-IBS). The couple's relationship quality was measured using the Relationship Quality Scale (RQS). Infant temperament was measured using the Infant Temperament Scale (ITS). The most important findings of the study are that both men's and women's mental health and the couple's relationship quality were associated with the parent-baby bond at 3 months. At 15 months postpartum, after accounting for the

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parent-baby bond at 3 months, only concurrent infant temperament remained a significant predictor for women. However, men’s bond with their baby at 15 months was predicted by their relationship with their partner in pregnancy and concurrent affective symptoms. Few significant gender differences were found, apart from women reporting more mental health symptoms than men. Conclusion: This study highlights the significance of the couple’s relationship in pregnancy and the infant’s temperament on the development of the parent-baby bond. Future research is needed to examine this in larger more representative samples.

Keywords: parent-baby bond mental health longitudinal father(s) mother(s)

Additional information

Funding

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