

## Interplay between childhood maltreatment, parental bonding, and gender effects: Impact on quality of life<sup>☆</sup>

Kobita Rikhye, Audrey R. Tyrka, Megan M. Kelly, Gerard G. Gagne Jr.,  
Andrea F. Mello, Marcelo F. Mello, Lawrence H. Price, Linda L. Carpenter\*

*Mood Disorders Research Program, Butler Hospital, Department of Psychiatry and Human Behavior,  
Brown Medical School, 345 Blackstone Boulevard., Providence, RI 02906, USA*

Received 4 October 2005; received in revised form 22 March 2007; accepted 18 April 2007  
Available online 20 December 2007

---

### Abstract

**Objective:** The aim of this study was to examine associations between childhood adversity, parental bonding, gender, depressive symptoms, and quality of life in non-treatment-seeking adults from the community.

**Method:** Effects of differential parental rearing were compared in adults who reported a high degree of childhood maltreatment ( $n = 72$ ) and those who reported no significant adverse events in childhood ( $n = 69$ ). Subjects completed retrospective measures of childhood maltreatment and perceived parenting style, as well as measures of current depressive symptoms and quality of life.

**Results:** The subjects without childhood maltreatment were younger and endorsed less current depressive symptomatology than did subjects with childhood maltreatment. While the subjects without a history of maltreatment reported more “optimal” bonding experiences with their parents, the maltreatment group members were more likely to characterize their early parental bonding experiences in terms of “affectionless control” ( $p < .001$  for both maternal and paternal parenting), “affectionate constraint” ( $p = .025$  for maternal parenting and  $p = .004$  for paternal parenting), or “weak or absent” bonding ( $p < .001$  for both maternal and paternal parenting). Results of a multiple regression analysis revealed that overall quality of paternal care ( $p = .015$ ) and current level of depressive symptoms ( $p < .001$ ) were significant independent predictors of adult quality of life. Gender effects between subjects providing parental bonding data were limited to the group with childhood maltreatment.

**Conclusion:** These findings extend previous work documenting a relationship between early life maltreatment and suboptimal parental bonding, suggesting gender-specific effects of maternal and paternal care. Effects of childhood maltreatment on quality of life in adulthood appear to be linked with the quality of childhood paternal care and

---

<sup>☆</sup> This work was supported in part by a Pfizer/Society for Women’s Health Research (SWHR) 2004 Research Scholar Award to Linda L. Carpenter, M.D. and an Investigator-Initiated Research Grant from Pfizer.

\* Corresponding author.

the occurrence of depressive symptomatology in adulthood, suggesting possible targets for primary or secondary prevention.

© 2007 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

*Keywords:* Parental bonding; Quality of life; Childhood maltreatment

---

## Introduction

Bowlby (1969, 1973, 1980) construed attachment as the strong emotional connection, which develops between a child and his care provider within the first 6 or 7 months of his birth as a result of the shared interaction between them. Any form of separation from the attachment figure or involvement in a stress-inducing situation triggers the *attachment behavioral system* that results in the child seeking protection and attempting to re-establish proximity with the caregiver. The caregiver provides a safe foundation from which the child can explore the world (George, 1996; Main, 1996).

Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, and Walls (1978) identified three styles of attachment in a controlled laboratory setting. Interaction patterns of infants were observed using the *strange situation* procedure that entails brief separations from the mother and contact with an unfamiliar person. They noted that a *securely* attached infant with a good bonding relationship with the mother gets slightly upset when she departs, and readily reaches out for her on her return. Mothers of securely attached children tend to provide consistent care, and are highly responsive to their children's needs. A child with an *insecure (anxious/ambivalent)* attachment becomes extremely upset in the absence of the mother or in the presence of a stranger; however, the child tends to be annoyed and becomes defiant towards the mother on her return. Mothers of these children tend to be inconsistent and unpredictable in provision of care. On the other hand, a child exhibiting an *insecure (anxious/avoidant)* style of attachment exhibits minimal anguish when the mother leaves, and disregards her on her return. Mothers of such children tend to be irritable and indifferent or overstimulating. Main and Solomon (1990) identified a fourth style of attachment called *disorganized/disoriented* wherein children appear to be fearful of care providers, and exhibit a confused attachment pattern. A large percentage of maltreated infants tend to manifest this insecure attachment style (Carlson, Cicchetti, Barnett, & Braunwald, 1989).

According to Bowlby (1973), early attachment experiences provide a template or an *internal working model* for later adult attachment which serves as a foundation for expectations and conduct in subsequent relationships (e.g., Collins & Read, 1990; George, 1996; Roisman, Collins, Sroufe, & Byron, 2005). The formation of this template is influenced by the child's perception of the caregiver's accessibility in the time of distress and the child's sense of self influenced by his perception of how willing the caregiver or others would be to help him in the time of need. Several researchers have developed models of adult attachment (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; George, Kaplan, & Main, 1987; Hazan & Shaver, 1987).

Accordingly, early life experiences have a powerful impact on future growth and development. While experiences during this vulnerable period affect many spheres of function, secure attachment to parental figures and positive bonding experiences during childhood have been specifically reported to be associated with greater welfare (Salzman, 1996), increased coping resources (Buelow, Lyddon, & Johnson, 2002), and higher perceived support in one's community (Blain, Thompson, & Whiffen, 1993). On the other

متن کامل مقاله

دریافت فوری ←

**ISI**Articles

مرجع مقالات تخصصی ایران

- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه تمام متن مقالات انگلیسی
- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه ترجمه شده مقالات
- ✓ پذیرش سفارش ترجمه تخصصی
- ✓ امکان جستجو در آرشیو جامعی از صدها موضوع و هزاران مقاله
- ✓ امکان دانلود رایگان ۲ صفحه اول هر مقاله
- ✓ امکان پرداخت اینترنتی با کلیه کارت های عضو شتاب
- ✓ دانلود فوری مقاله پس از پرداخت آنلاین
- ✓ پشتیبانی کامل خرید با بهره مندی از سیستم هوشمند رهگیری سفارشات