BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

- Child abuse and neglect is major social problem
- Improving the relationship between infant(s) and their parent(s) is of great importance and can reduce child maltreatment
- Infants of parents with substance use/abuse problems have a higher rate of entry to the foster care system compared to infants of non-abusing parents
- Substance dependent parents have trouble forming healthy attachment with their infants
- Infant massage interventions have been shown to improve bonds between parent(s) and their infant(s), increase parenting skills, and decrease parental stress and depressive moods
- The current study evaluates the impact of a 10-week infant massage intervention program with substance dependent parent(s) and their infant(s)

METHOD

Infant Participants (N = 17)
- 64.7% female
- Mean age = 3.45 months; SD = 2.735
- 59.9% born with positive toxicology screen

Procedure
- Staff of the treatment facility identified the residents who registered for the intervention
- Parents who agreed to participate in the study read and signed Informed Consent Forms
- Interviews were conducted before and after the infant massage intervention at a residential substance abuse treatment facility

Measures
- Semi-structured demographic and program evaluation survey
- The Beck Depression Inventory (BDI)
- The Parenting Stress Index (PSI)
- The Knowledge of Infant Development Questionnaire (KIDI)

RESULTS

Standardized Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Pre-test Mean</th>
<th>Post-test Mean</th>
<th>t-test</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BDI</td>
<td>17.09</td>
<td>8.82</td>
<td>4.49</td>
<td>&lt;0.05</td>
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<td>PSI</td>
<td>55.34</td>
<td>27.35</td>
<td>6.95</td>
<td>&lt;0.05</td>
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<tr>
<td>KIDI</td>
<td>47.1%</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>&lt;0.05</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Parent Reports on Happy, Confused, and Sad moments with their infants:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Before</th>
<th>After</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Happy</td>
<td>88.2%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confused</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
<td>3.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sad</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What Parents Learned From the Group
- It helped in soothing baby when baby is not feeling well.
- Learn how to massage baby's body
- It taught me the importance of taking time out to stay connected
- The teachers made us explore our inner childhood
- Helped to communicate with my baby.
- The bond (the bond) would have been as strong without infant massage."

DISCUSSION

- Though not statistically significant, results demonstrate decreased parent depression and increased knowledge of child development following participation in an infant massage program.
- Results suggest lower parental stress following the intervention, in particular in the dysfunctional interactions between parent and child
- After completing the intervention, parents reported having more “happy,” less “frustrating/confused,” and less “sad” moments with their infant each day
- Parents indicated that they learned about infant development and how to understand and soothe their infants during the intervention
- Participants indicated that the intervention was very helpful in creating a stronger bond with their infants
- The current study is limited by small sample size, lack of comparison group, and pre-test post-test sensitization
- Future research should include more participants, a comparison group, and measures to directly assess infant participants

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