Attachment Intervention with Parents and Infants in Early Substance Abuse Recovery

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BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

- Child abuse and neglect is a 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
- 88.2% female

Parent Participants (N = 17)
- 88.2% female
- Mean age = 33.7 years; SD = 5.865
- 41.2% completed high school
- 100% were unemployed

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 Scores</th>
<th>Post-test Scores</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PSI</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>PSI - Parent-Child Difficult</td>
<td>22.30 ± 1.96</td>
<td>18.48 ± 2.35</td>
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<tr>
<td>PSI - Parental Stress</td>
<td>21.55 ± 1.96</td>
<td>18.30 ± 2.35</td>
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<tr>
<td>PSI - Problem Behavior</td>
<td>22.95 ± 1.96</td>
<td>18.55 ± 2.35</td>
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<tr>
<td>PSI - Total</td>
<td>68.70 ± 1.96</td>
<td>55.35 ± 2.35</td>
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<tr>
<td>BDI Total Score Range</td>
<td>0 – 63</td>
<td>0 – 63</td>
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<tr>
<td>BDI Mean Score</td>
<td>16.06 ± 4.03</td>
<td>7.44 ± 2.59</td>
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<tr>
<td>KIDI Mean Score</td>
<td>93.4 ± 7.03</td>
<td>88.2 ± 6.23</td>
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<tr>
<td>Infant Placement</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>52.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Infant Ethnicity</td>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>76.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>23.5%</td>
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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

CONTACT

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