The Impact of Childhood Maltreatment and Ongoing Intimate Partner Violence on Trajectories of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder across the Transition to Parenthood

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Interpersonal Trauma

- Threaten *fundamental human needs* to belong and form protective relationships that offer safety and security
  - Physical and sexual assault
  - Childhood maltreatment
  - Intimate partner violence (IPV)
- PTSD symptoms more common and more severe when trauma is interpersonal in nature

(Anders et al., 2012; Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Forbes et al., 2012; Iverson et al., 2012)
Trauma and PTSD across the Transition to Parenthood

- General population lifetime rate of PTSD: 6.8%
  - Men: 3.6%; Women: 9.7%
- Women more likely than men to experience interpersonal trauma and subsequently develop PTSD symptoms
- During the perinatal period
  - Exposure to interpersonal trauma ranges from 65-92%
  - Rates of current PTSD range from 8-33%
- Higher rates of PTSD noted in perinatal samples compared to other samples of women

(Anders et al., 2010; Heddke et al., 2008; Iverson et al., 2013; Kessler et al., 2005; Muzik et al., 2013; Seng, D’Andrea, & Ford, 2014; Seng et al., 2011)
Experiences of interpersonal trauma impact parenting:
- Less responsiveness, empathy, and sensitivity
- More intrusiveness
- Greater inconsistency, hostility, and permissiveness

PTSD symptoms are associated with:
- Greater impulsivity and withdrawal or avoidance in parent-child interactions
- Negative perceptions of the child and parent-child relationship

Symptoms of PTSD negatively affect resources for parenting:
- Bonding at birth
- Providing appropriate, responsive care

For women who have experienced interpersonal trauma, PTSD symptoms can be activated by various experiences of becoming a parent

(Chemetob & Carlson, 2004; Davies et al., 2008; Huth-Bocks et al., 2004; Kelleher et al., 2008; Levendosky et al., 2006; Lyons-Ruth & Block, 1996; Muzik et al., 2013; Schechter et al., 2008; Bert et al., 2009; Pereira et al., 2012)
Patterns of PTSD

- Four common patterns of PTSD over time:
  - Resilience
  - Recovery
  - Delayed onset
  - Chronic
- All four substantiated in non-interpersonal trauma
  - Natural disaster
  - Combat-related trauma
  - Medical injury

(Bonanno, 2004; Bonanno & Mancini, 2010; deRoon-Cassini et al., 2010; Orcutt et al., 2014; Rusch, & Bonanno, 2010; Pietrzak et al., 2013)
Patterns following Interpersonal Trauma

✧ Intimate partner violence
  ✧ Chronic
  ✧ Recovery (marked and delayed)
  ✧ Resilience
  ✧ Delayed onset not yet supported

✧ Maltreatment during childhood
  ✧ No known studies to date

Emerging questions:
✧ Does the delayed onset pattern exist following interpersonal trauma?
✧ How do different experiences of interpersonal trauma impact patterns of PTSD?
  ✧ Especially childhood maltreatment
✧ What patterns of PTSD symptoms exist across the transition to parenthood?

(Armour et al., 2012; Steenkamp et al., 2012)
The Present study
The Parenting Project

Time 1
Pregnancy

Phone interview
- n = 119
- Mother and infant health and wellbeing

Home interview
- n = 120
- Maternal representations of the child
- Questionnaires
  - Trauma history
  - Mental health symptoms
  - Early and current relationships

Time 2
3-months postpartum

Home interview
- n = 114
- Infant attachment
- Maternal sensitivity
- Mother-infant free play
- Questionnaires
  - Parenting
  - Current IPV
  - Current relationships
  - Mental health symptoms

Time 3
Age 1

Home interview
- n = 99
- Maternal representations of the child
- Infant attachment
- Maternal sensitivity
- Mother-infant free play
- Questionnaires
  - Parenting
  - Current IPV
  - Current relationships
  - Mental health symptoms

Time 4
Age 2

Home interview
- n = 82
- Maternal sensitivity
- Adult attachment
- Mother-infant free play
- Child language
- Questionnaires
  - Current IPV
  - Mental health symptoms

Time 5
Age 2.5-3
Participants

• 120 pregnant women
• Age range: 18-42, $M = 26, SD = 5.7$
• 47% African–American, 36% Caucasian, 13% Biracial, 4% Other
• 20% had a high school diploma or less, 44% some college, 36% college degree
• 64% single/never married, 28% married, 4% divorced, 4% separated
• Median monthly family income = $1500
• 88% receive services from WIC
  • 90% have public health insurance
• 30% first time mothers
Measures

✧ Interpersonal trauma
  ✧ Childhood Trauma Questionnaire (CTQ; Bernstein & Fink, 1998)
    ✧ Assessed at pregnancy
  ✧ Conflict Tactics Scale – 2 (CTS-2; Straus, Hamby, & Warren, 2003)
    ✧ Assessed at pregnancy and 1-, 2-, and 3-years postpartum

✧ PTSD symptoms
  ✧ PTSD Checklist – Civilian (PCL-C; Weathers, Litz, Herman, Huska, & Keane, 1993)
    ✧ Assessed at pregnancy and 1-, 2-, and 3-years postpartum
Results
Results

Latent Class Growth Analysis (LCGA)

- Mplus Version 6.0
- Person-centered latent growth modeling approach used to identify underlining heterogeneity in a sample (Wang & Bodner, 2007)
- Heterogeneity captured by a categorical latent variable (trajectory class)
- Models for 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 classes were tested

Child maltreatment and IPV variables entered as covariates

- Maternal age and education
Results

1-class model fit:
\[ \chi^2(18) = 136.22, \ p = .000; \ RMSEA = .234; \ CFI = .432; \ TLI = .180; \ SRMR = .160 \]
## Results

Table 1.

*Model fit statistics*

<table>
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<th>Model</th>
<th>BIC</th>
<th>Entropy</th>
<th>LMR-LRT</th>
<th>p-value</th>
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*Note.* LMR-LRT = Lo-Mendel-Rubin Likelihood Ratio Test; BLRT = Bootstrap Likelihood Ratio Test.
Results

Increasing (15%)

Steady moderate (30%)

Steady low (55%)

PTSD Symptoms

Time of Assessment

Pregnancy
1-year Postpartum
2-years Postpartum
3-years Postpartum
Maternal Age & Education

Women in the increasing class were younger on average compared to women in the steady low group.

Women in the increasing class had less educational attainment on average than women in the steady low class.
Women in the increasing and steady moderate groups reported experiencing greater severity of childhood maltreatment on average than women in the steady low group.
Intimate Partner Violence

At 3-years postpartum, there are no differences between groups on reported IPV

At 1- and 2-years postpartum, women in the increasing group started reporting experiencing more IPV than women in the steady moderate group.

Women in the increasing and steady moderate groups reported experiencing more IPV at all waves of assessment than women in the steady low group.

Women in the steady low group reported no differences between groups on reported IPV.
Discussion

✧ No evidence for a delayed onset trajectory following interpersonal trauma

✧ No recovery trajectory across the transition to parenthood

✧ Experiences of childhood maltreatment lead to more severe PTSD symptom profiles, especially when coupled with ongoing IPV
Implications & Future Directions

✧ We need to be assessing for PTSD and ongoing IPV at Not all women experience the same pattern of PTSD
  ✧ Symptoms appear to be maintained by ongoing IPV
✧ More investigations exploring patterns of PTSD following childhood maltreatment are needed
✧ Replication with larger samples to further explore the existence of the four theoretical trajectories
✧ Latent Profile Analysis to see if different trauma exposure profiles exist
Families in our study who allowed us to come to their homes and interview them so extensively with their young children.

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