

The Effect of Psycho-social Risk in the Development of Mother-child Relationship During the First Year of Childhood

LUCIA DI FILIPPO, PH.D.¹

Abstract

The present longitudinal study is an explorative research regarding the “psycho-social risk” and “its effect on the development of mother-child relationship”. Its purpose is to compare two groups of mother-infant dyads at high and low psycho-social risk both at the level of maternal attachment and of interaction styles.

The psycho-social risk is a variable compounded by a lot of factors. In literature few researches took an interest in the relationship between this variable and the mother’s attachment or between this one and the mother-child interaction during the time.

The data collected have been coded using *AAI* (George, Kaplan & Main, 1996) and Crittenden’s *CARE-Index* (2003). The main results show an effect of this variable at level of maternal sensitivity and unresponsive scales putting the dyads at high risk of neglecting. The mothers at high psycho-social risk have less expertise in parenthood during the child’s early months of life and they are more at risk of neglecting when the child is 3 months old; in parallel, it seems that their children are more passive in the relationship than those in the control group.

At the end the mothers at high psycho-social risk have insecure attachment and U and CC categories more often than those in the control group, as achieved by Ammaniti and colleagues’ research (2002). In particular the maternal Unresolved attachment increases the risk of passivity in the children who related to mothers at high psycho-social risk.

Keywords

psycho-social risk, maternal attachment, interaction styles, mother-child relationship, child neglecting.