



Navigating Parenthood: A Daily Affect Emotion Study on Parental Mental Health



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Introduction

In current mental health research, substantial literature has been amassed through past investigations, offering insights into various mental health conditions such as delusions, hallucinations, manic/hypomanic episodes, depression, and generalized anxiety disorder (Smith et al., 2019; Brown et al., 2020; Johnson et al., 2018). While existing research has provided valuable understandings of these conditions, significant gaps persist in comprehensively understanding the mental health of parents (Adams & Thompson, 2017; Roberts & Davis, 2016). Existing studies may fail to capture the nuanced experiences unique to parenthood, necessitating a more holistic approach to mental health assessment (Wilson & Harris, 2021). Addressing these gaps is essential to foster a deeper understanding of parental mental health and its implications. This study aims to fill these gaps by employing structured clinical interviews to assess parental mental health and daily emotions utilizing the Structured Clinical Interview for DSM-5 (SCID-5) as a reliable tool (Smith et al., 2019; Brown et al., 2020; Johnson et al., 2018.)

Methods

Participants:

- 100 parents recruited through Facebook groups and flyers posted in local shops.
- Individuals must be over the age of 18
- Participants are parents of a baby aged between 4-8 months.
- Parents reporting suicidal thoughts will be excluded from the study.

Assessments:

- Maternal depression: The Beck Depression Inventory-II
- Mother-Infant bonding: The Mother-to-Infant Bonding Scale
- Infant negative affect: The Infant Behavior Questionnaire

Procedure:

- Eligibility: Interested individuals will go through a Zoom screening session to provide information about their babies' date of birth, mood, and suicidality. Parents reporting suicidal thoughts will be excluded.
- Surveys: Participants will engage in 36 days of surveys, each lasting 5-8 minutes, to self-assess their mood.
- Final Assessment: On the last day of the survey period, participants will complete an overall assessment of how they felt throughout the month-long study.

Results

Our preliminary analysis suggests a significant link between parental depression and child well-being, highlighting significant effects on child income and higher levels of physical and neglectful abuse among depressed parents. My reliability scores affirm the consistency of these effects, strengthening the case for parental depression's influence on child outcomes. Addressing parental mental health is crucial for promoting healthy family functioning, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions. Further research with larger samples is needed to confirm and expand upon these findings, potentially uncovering underlying mechanisms and informing evidence-based interventions such as psychotherapy, support groups, parenting education programs, family therapy and other community resources to support families affected by parental depression.

Psychosis administered	Current Manic administered	Current Hypomanic administered	Past Manic administered	Past Hypomanic administered	Current MDE administered	Past MDE administered	Current GAD administered	Past GAD administered
Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N

Figure 1. SCID-5 sheet for mental health assessment showing delusions, hallucinations, manic/hypomanic episodes, depression, anxiety disorders, psychosis, major depressive episode (MDE) generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) Participant rows are marked with unique IDs, while columns indicate whether specific sections were administered (yes/no).

Comparisons of Children's Mean Health and Functioning in Families with Depressed and Nondepressed Parents

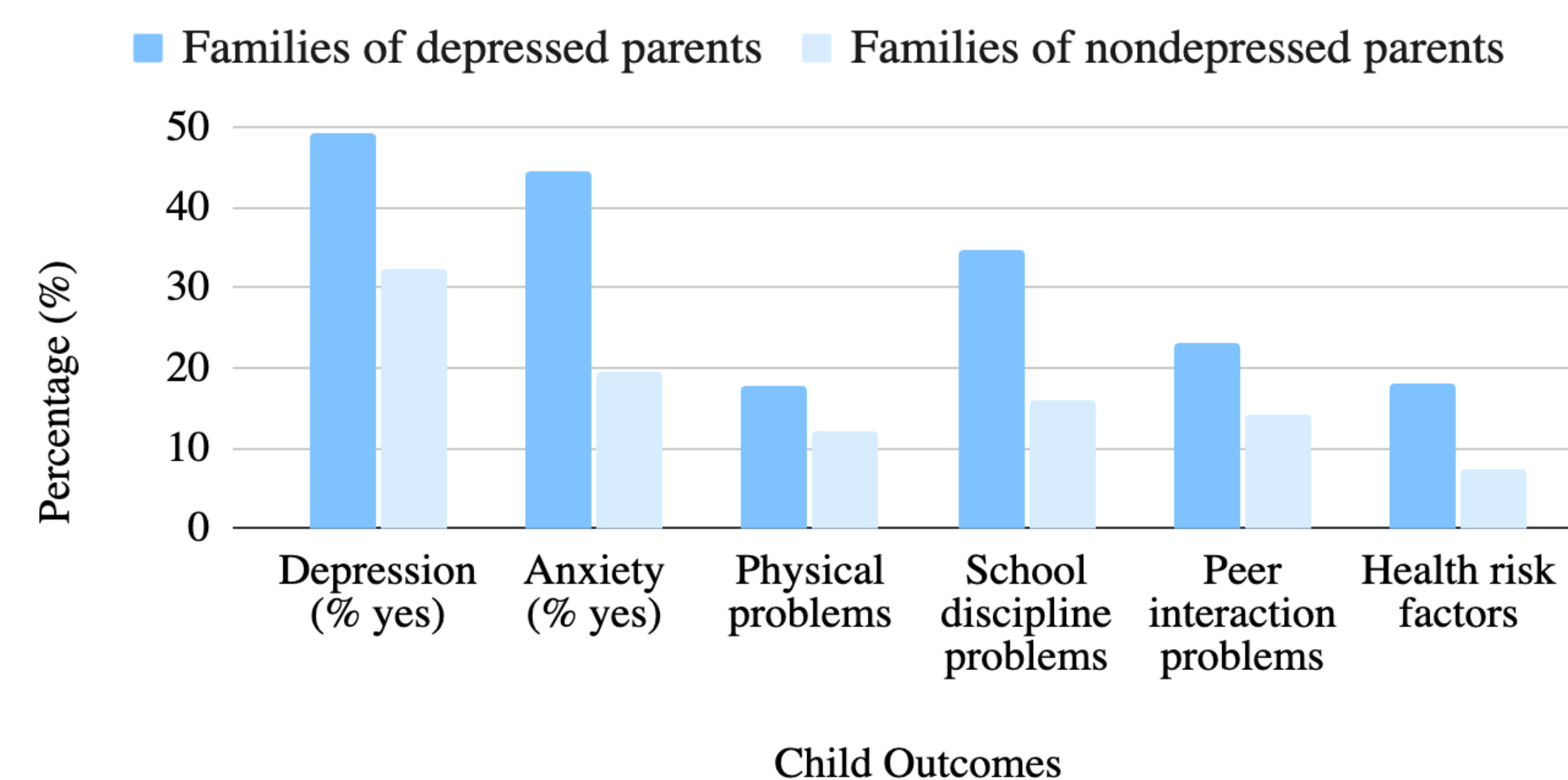


Figure 2. The outcomes of children, comparing those with depressed parents to those with nondepressed parents. The data indicates a higher percentage of reported psychological symptoms and behavioral problems among families with depressed parents compared to families with nondepressed parents. This information was synthesized from a literature review conducted for the article "Comparisons of children of depressed and nondepressed parents: A social-environmental perspective" authored by Billings and Moos (1983).

Future Direction

Our study lays the groundwork for further exploration into the intricate relationship between parental depression and infant care. Moving forward, research efforts should focus on expanding the sample size and addressing potential biases to enhance the reliability and generalizability of findings. Additionally, longitudinal studies are warranted to track changes in parental mental health and its impact on parenting outcomes over time. Exploring additional factors that influence this relationship, such as social support and coping strategies, can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the complexities involved. Moreover, investigating diverse populations will allow for the examination of cultural and contextual factors that may influence parental mental health and parenting behaviors. Ultimately, the insights gained from these endeavors can inform the development of targeted interventions aimed at promoting the mental health and well-being of both parents and infants, thus fostering healthy parent-child relationships.

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