

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF BABIES

THE SPECIFICITY OF ASSOCIATIONS BETWEEN DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF PARENTING AND DIFFERENT CHILD OUTCOMES

Lynne Murray
NAIMH 2021
Copenhagen, Denmark

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BABIES ARE ENTIRELY DEPENDENT ON OTHERS FOR THEIR SURVIVAL AND DEVELOPMENT

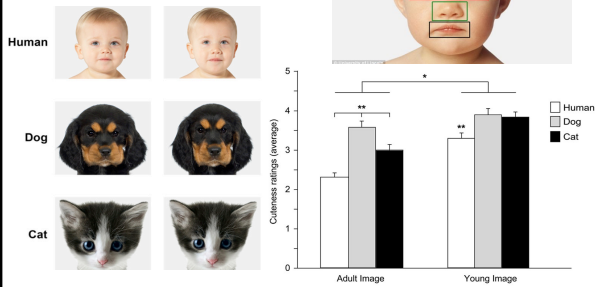
- To make sure they receive the care they need, babies need to get into relationship with people who will be committed to them
- Both adults and babies are geared up for this

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ADULTS' BASIC ATTRACTION TO BABIES: 'Cute' features (human and animal) attract us (Front. Psychol 2014, Borgi et al.)



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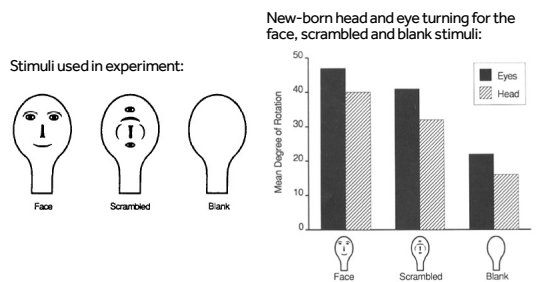
ADULTS' BASIC ATTRACTION TO BABIES: 'INTUITIVE PARENTING' RESPONSES

- Specific brain responses to 'baby' faces (like romantic attachments)
- Stronger with own infant
- Hormones are involved- oxytocin
- Specific behaviours set off:
 - stereotyped greeting- raise eyebrows, open mouth, smile
 - voice changes- high pitch, simple, melodic



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NEW-BORNS PREFER FACE-LIKE STIMULI, AND TRACK THEM



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NEW-BORNS PREFER FACES READY TO ENGAGE- EYES OPEN

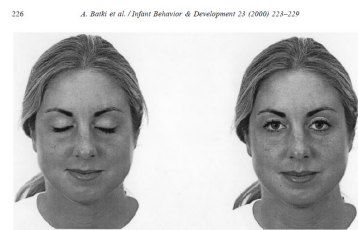


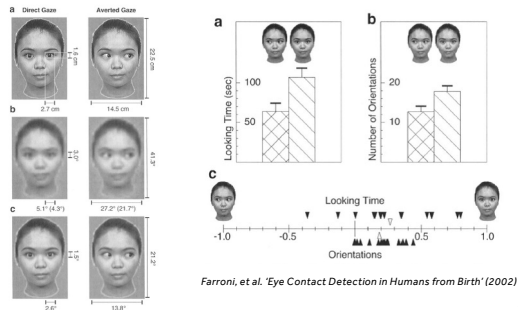
Fig. 1. The two photos used in the experiment.

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NEW-BORNS PREFER FACES READY TO ENGAGE- EYES FORWARD



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NEW-BORNS RAPIDLY PREFER THEIR CARERS

- Their mother's face vs. someone else's
- Their mother's voice
- Their mother's odour

So, they quickly get into particular relationships, and this helps ensure good care

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YET.....

- While our 'biological preparedness' lays the foundations, relationships between babies and their carers vary markedly.
- This is important, since humans have to adjust to a great variety of environments

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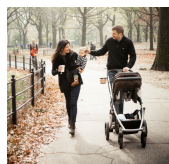
DIFFERENT ENVIRONMENTS IMPOSE DIFFERENT CHILDREARING PRIORITIES



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THE BIOLOGICAL AND THE SOCIAL

- Babies and carers naturally equipped to forge relationships, and much parenting is intuitive, but are important variations:
 - Cultural differences
 - Varied backgrounds, e.g., poverty, educational opportunities



- Individual differences- in mental health, values, strengths and difficulties

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STUDYING DIVERSITY

Studying parenting in different circumstances helps us understand its effects on child development and, if we want, equips us to change

- Cross cultural differences
- Parental depression
- Socio-economic adversity

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SPECIFICITY OF EFFECTS

Different parenting practices are associated with different patterns of child development. Strengths in one area don't always predict strengths in others.

Useful to think of child development in different domains:

- Social understanding
- Emotion regulation and self-control
- Attachment security
- Cognitive development (e.g., attention, language)

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FIRST DOMAIN-SOCIAL UNDERSTANDING

'Theory of mind'

Self-awareness

Empathy

Cooperation

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IMPORTANCE OF EARLY SOCIAL UNDERSTANDING

- Predicts
 - later social understanding
 - social relationships

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SOCIAL UNDERSTANDING 1

Supported by:

3 months: mirroring



6 months: triadic play



9 months: sharing interest



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SOCIAL UNDERSTANDING 2

Supported by 12 months

pretending



joint projects

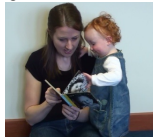


teasing



squabbling

talking about mental states



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SOCIAL UNDERSTANDING

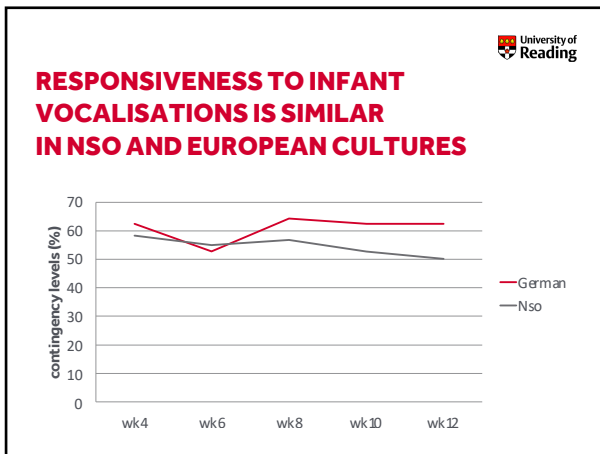
Cross cultural differences

Individualistic vs. Affiliative

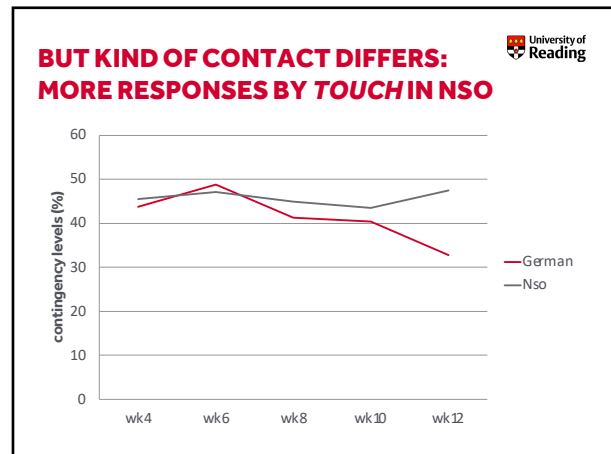


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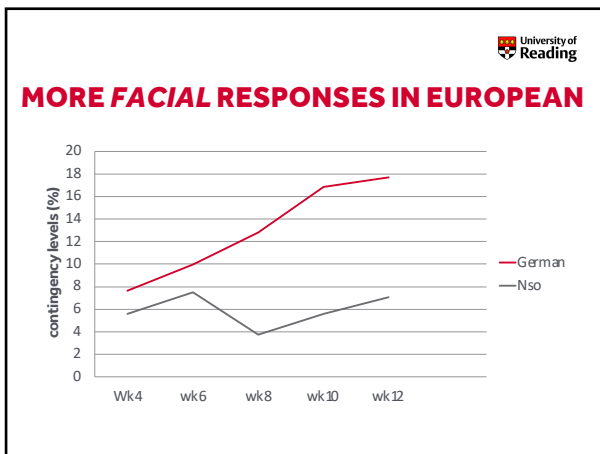
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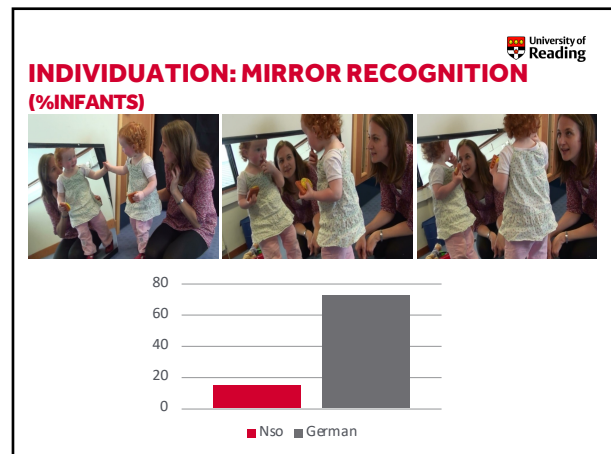
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SECOND DOMAIN EMOTION REGULATION

Self-regulation of feelings and states (e.g., distress, sleep)

Management of aggressive impulses

Overcoming inhibition

Internalizing rules

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IMPORTANCE OF EARLY AGGRESSION

- Aggressive behaviour normal 1-2 yrs
- Usually most aggressive period in life span
- Most children grow out of it after 2-3 years
- If persistent and pervasive at 3 years, strong predictor of antisocial behaviour and violence in adolescence and beyond

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EMOTION REGULATION 1



Supported by:

New-born: 'holding'



2 months: 'repair'



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EMOTION REGULATION 2



Supported by:

4 months plus:
body games



rough and tumble

risky games

play fighting



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EMOTION REGULATION 3



Supported by:

routines and
explanations



consistent, warm,
non-coercive
discipline



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POSTNATAL DEPRESSION -PND



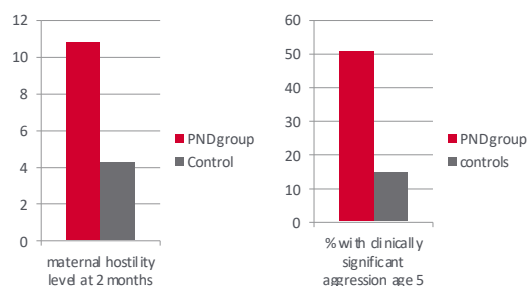
- Common: HICs 10-15%; LMICs 35%
- Incapacitating
- Affects social relationships

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PND AND CHILD AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR

(MURRAY ET AL., 1993; 1999)



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THIRD DOMAIN ATTACHMENT



- Attachment defined as 'secure' or 'insecure'
- Secure babies and children
 - Aware of their dependency
 - Trust carer is available and responsive when needed
 - Balance contact-seeking and exploration

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IMPORTANCE OF EARLY ATTACHMENT SECURITY

- One of strongest predictors of
 - general adjustment
 - intimate relationships
 - mental health

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SECURE ATTACHMENT 1

Supported by:- responsiveness and sensitivity to distress

Separation anxiety



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SECURE ATTACHMENT 2

Supported by:- responsiveness and sensitivity to distress

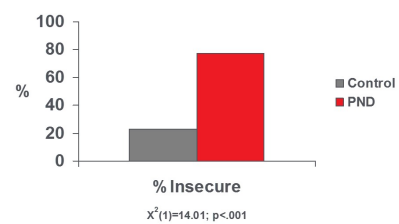
Stranger fear



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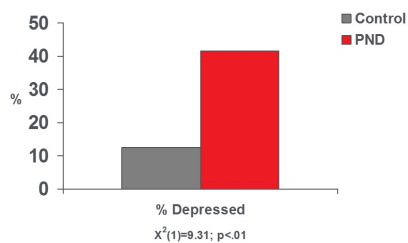
PND AND INSECURE INFANT ATTACHMENT

(MURRAY ET AL., 1992; 2011)



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PND AND CHILD DEPRESSION BY AGE 16 (MURRAY ET AL., 2011)



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FOURTH DOMAIN COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

- Attention
- Learning
- Language
- Reasoning

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IMPORTANCE OF EARLY COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

- Highly stable from infancy
- Predicts IQ in adolescence and adulthood
- Predicts academic achievements

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COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT 1

Supported by:

exploring and experimenting

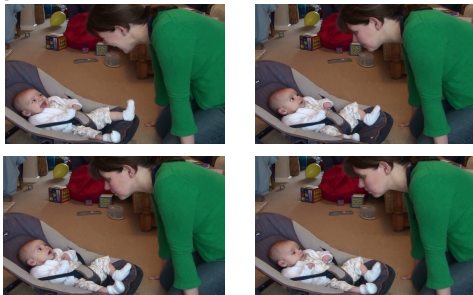


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COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT 2

Supported by:

general responsiveness- the 'Still Face' experiment

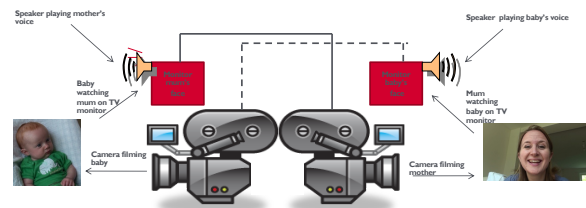


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COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT 3

Supported by:

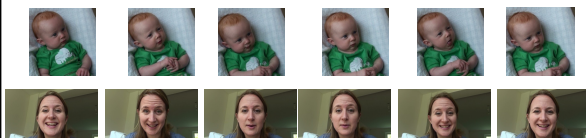
Contingent responsiveness- the 'double-video' experiment



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THE 'DOUBLE VIDEO' EXPERIMENT -LIVE

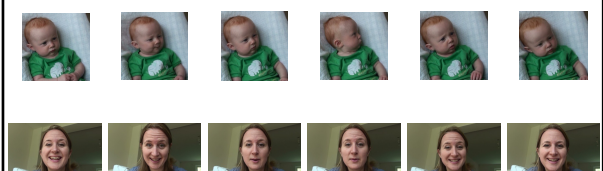
Iris watches her mother who is **contingently** responding to her



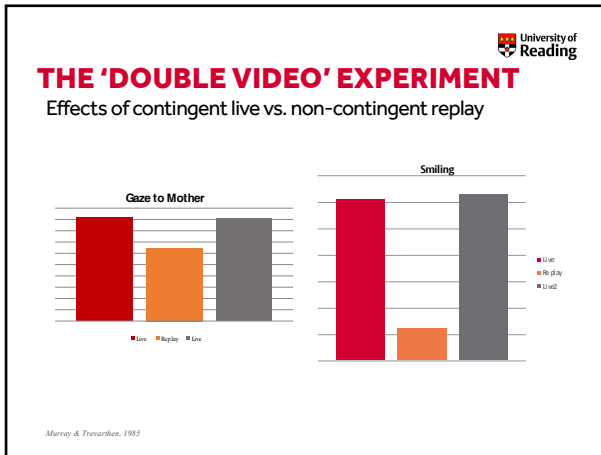
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INTERACTIVE DISRUPTION- THE 'DOUBLE VIDEO' EXPERIMENT: REPLAY

Iris watches her mother who is **not** contingently responding to her



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COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT 4

Supported by:
regulating infant attention



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COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT 5

Supported by:
'scaffolding'



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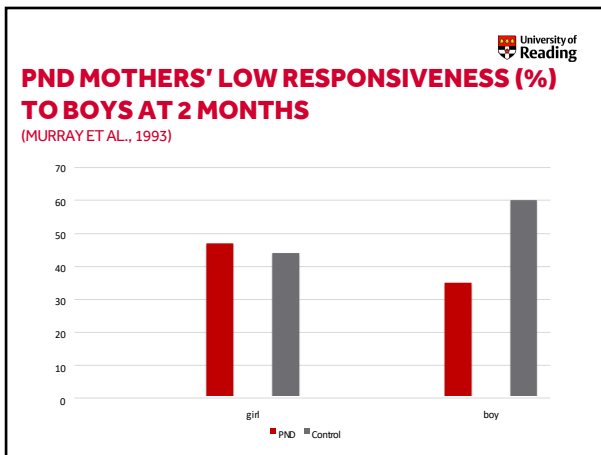
COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT 6

BOOK SHARING, 'DIALOGIC' READING

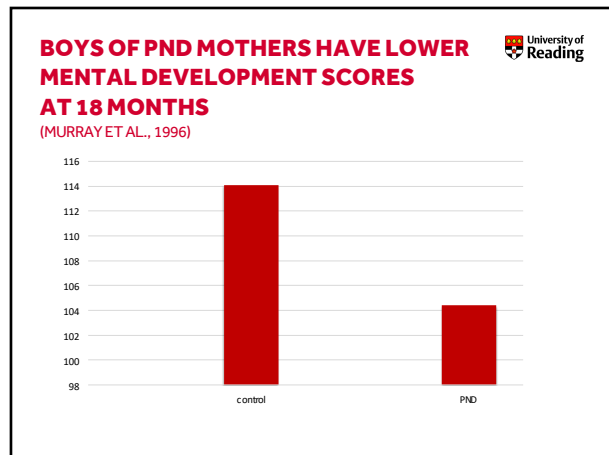
engagement, contingency,
attention regulation,
scaffolding



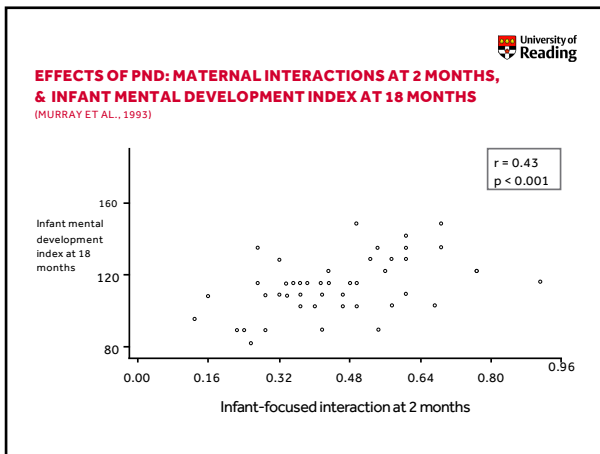
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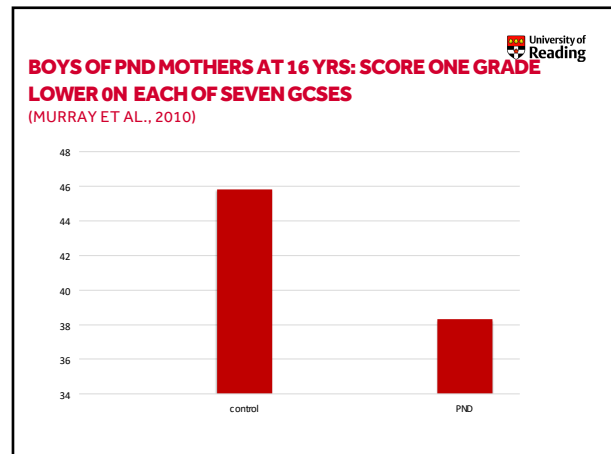
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Specificity of association between different parenting dimensions and different child outcomes: implications for assessment and for interventions

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INTERVENTIONS IN KHAYELITSHA, S. AFRICA

- For attachment insecurity
- For cognitive delay

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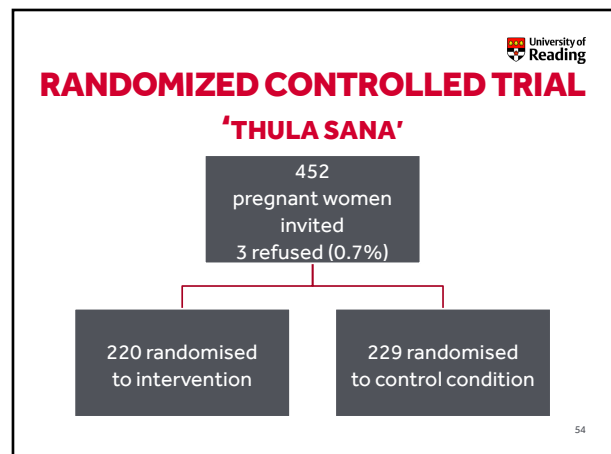
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INTERVENTIONS IN KHAYELITSHA, ATTACHMENT

- Our epidemiological work in Khayelitsha had shown high rates of
 - maternal depression
 - mother-infant interaction difficulties
 - insecure infant attachment

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THULA SANA

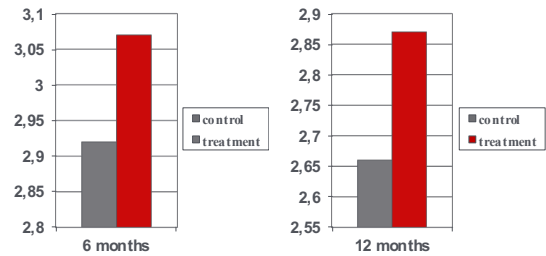
- Home visiting in pregnancy and first six postnatal months
- Home visitors- trained local mothers
- Counselling
- Support mother's understanding infant cues
- Support responses to infant distress



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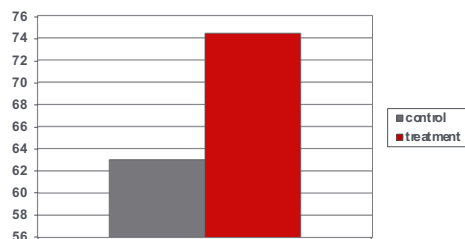
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MOTHER-INFANT INTERACTIONS AFTER TREATMENT: SENSITIVITY AT 6 AND 12 MONTHS



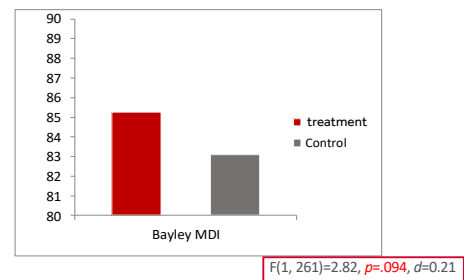
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SECURE INFANT ATTACHMENT (%) AT 18 MONTHS (COOPER, MURRAY, BMJ, 2009)



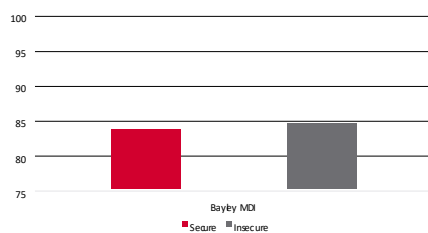
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BUT: LITTLE BENEFIT TO COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT



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NO RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INFANT ATTACHMENT & COGNITIVE SCORES



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RESULT OF THULA SANA EXAMPLE OF 'SPECIFICITY OF EFFECTS'

Focus had been on supporting response to infant distress
No cognitive stimulation or scaffolding support

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EARLY LITERACY IN SOUTH AFRICA

- Boston School of Education, 2007 review of 40 countries:
South Africa at the bottom of the performance table
- Department of Basic Education, 2011:
**58% SA 9 yr olds not achieving acceptable
performance level.**

Widespread recognition needs urgent attention

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END OF PART ONE

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