



# Child maltreatment and difficulties in emotion regulation: A meta-analysis

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## Theoretical framework

child maltreatment affects the cognitive, emotional and physical development •  
(2011) and functioning (Petchel & Pizzagalli,

specifically, child maltreatment alters the development of emotion regulation •  
(1998; Shields & Cicchetti, 2004) (Cloitre et al.,

**emotion regulation** - defined as a multidimensional construct involving •

awareness, understanding, and acceptance of emotions □

access to adaptive strategies for modulating the intensity and/or duration □  
of emotional responses

the ability to control behaviors, including inhibiting impulsive behaviors □  
and engaging in goal-directed behaviors, when experiencing emotional  
(2004) distress (Gratz & Roemer,

## Theoretical framework

of the mental disorders involve problems associated with 75% •  
(2010) emotion and emotion regulation (Werner & Gross,

patients with different mental disorders (e.g. BPD, MDD) •  
retrospectively report higher levels of traumatic experiences in  
(2001; Molnar et. Al., 1997) childhood (Zanarini et al.,

specific types of child maltreatment (emotional abuse and neglect) •  
are associated with higher levels of emotion regulation difficulties  
(2010, Burns et al., 2014) (Fernando Carvalho et al.,

## Theoretical framework

a rearing environment characterized by emotional maltreatment is •  
associated with difficulties in emotion regulation

- non-acceptance of negative emotions □
- difficulties controlling impulsive behaviors when experiencing □  
negative emotions
- limited access to emotion regulation strategies perceived as □  
effective
- lack of emotional awareness □

; Karagoz 2012; Bradbury & Shaffer, 2010; Soenke et al., 2010 Burns et al., )  
(2015; Oshri et al., 2015; Kuo et al., 2015 Dag,

## Theoretical framework

Adolescence: a period of vulnerability that, in the context of •  
adverse events, could set the stage for chronic emotion  
(2012dysregulation and psychopathology (Ladouceur,

differences in the prevalence of child maltreatment depending on •  
the method of data collection

self-report measures are characterized by underreporting of •  
(2000maltreatment (Fergusson et al.,

## Method

identification of studies •

### **Search terms:**

emotion regulation  
child abuse  
childhood trauma  
childhood traumatic events  
early life stress  
adverse events  
child maltreatment

### **Databases:**

PsychInfo  
PubMed  
ScienceDirect

## Method

### inclusion criteria •

studies focusing on at least one dimension of the relation between -  
child maltreatment and emotion regulation

### exclusion criteria •

studies in which child maltreatment was assessed together with -  
(other factors (e.g., family stress

dissertations, master's theses, or conference presentations-

## Method

coded characteristics of studies •

maltreatment measurement -

type of maltreatment assessed -

(dimensions of maltreatments assessed (e.g. severity, frequency -

(type of measurement (e.g. self-report, official report -

emotion regulation measurement -

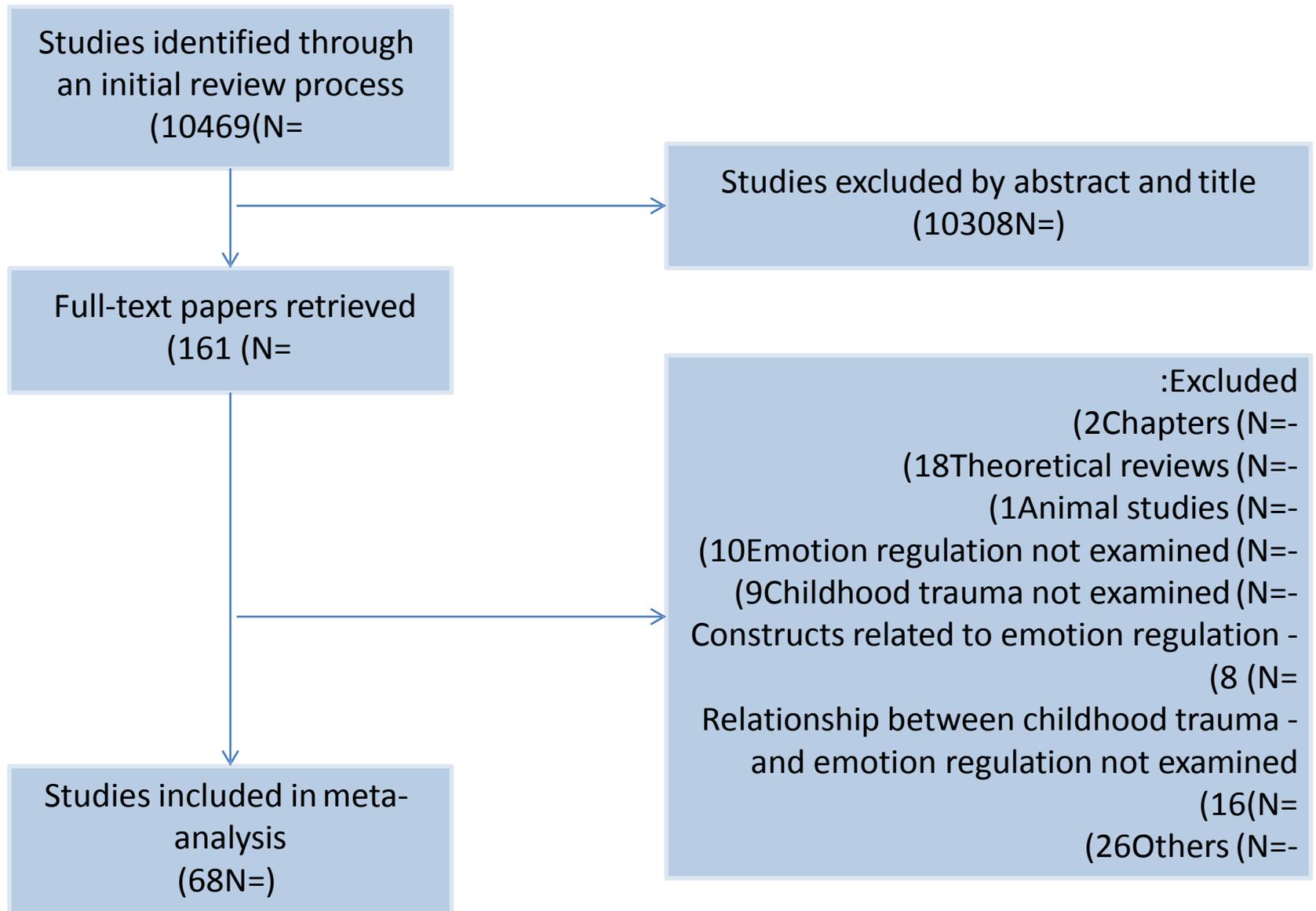
(type of sample (e.g. clinical, non-clinical -

## :Method

data analysis •

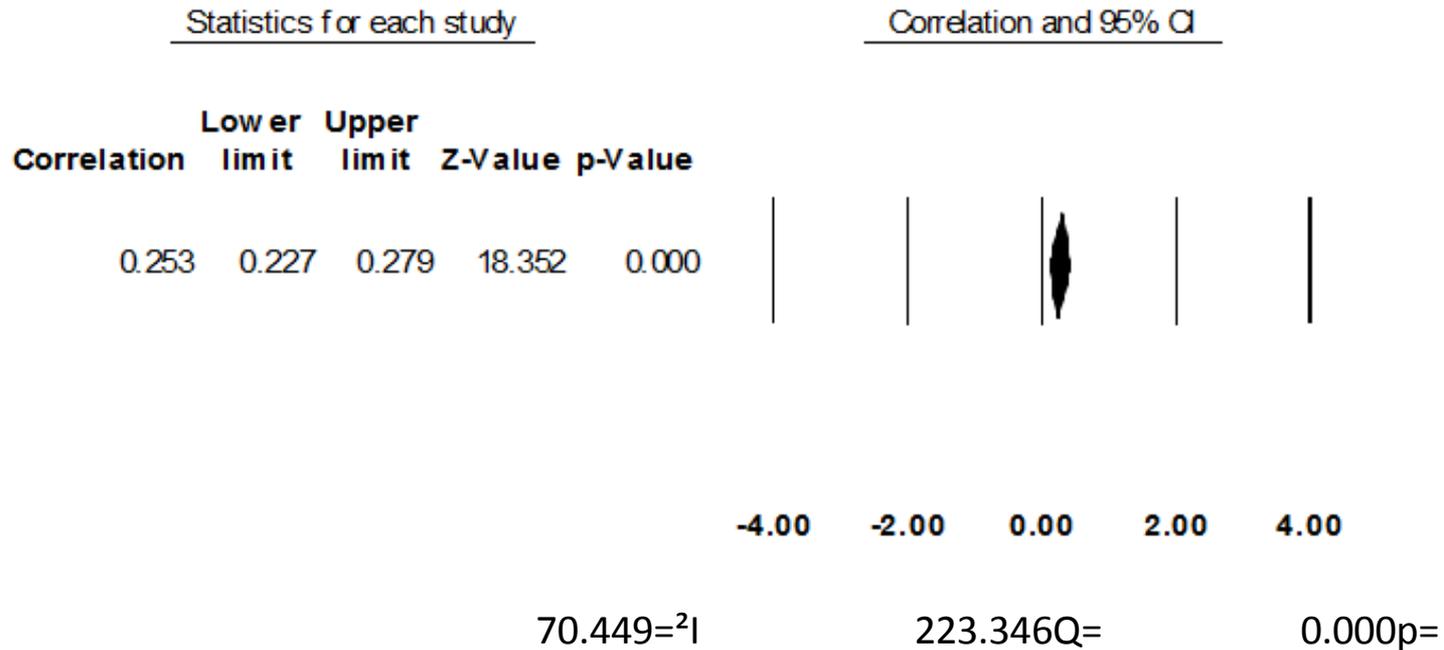
- effects sizes from each study were transformed in correlation coefficient  $r$
- all individual effects sizes were pooled in Comprehensive Meta Analysis
- analysis were performed with random-effect model
- publication bias was examined by inspecting the funnel plot and using Duval and Tweedie's trim and fill procedure
- several moderators were tested

# Results – Flow diagram of studies considered for inclusion



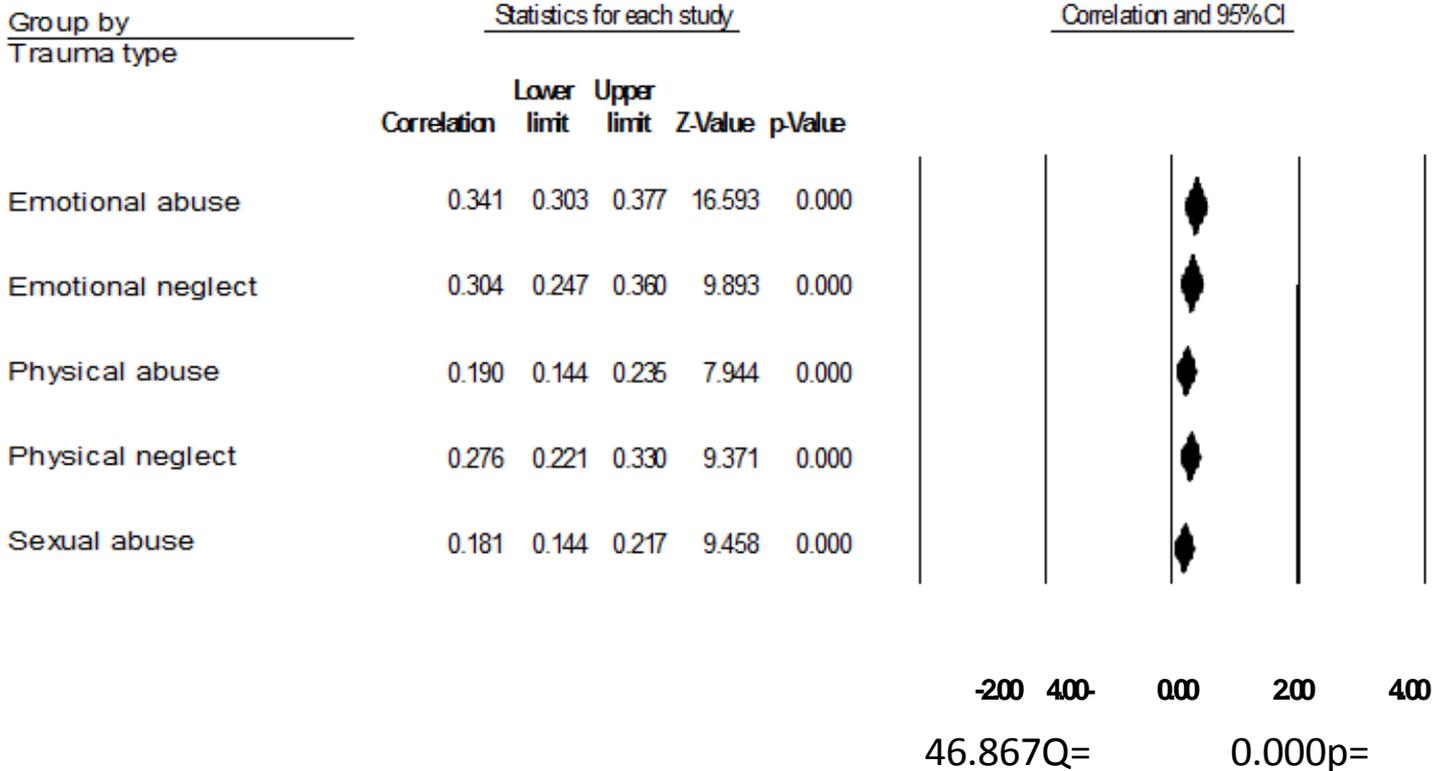
# Results

Mean effect sizes of the association between child maltreatment and difficulties with emotion regulation



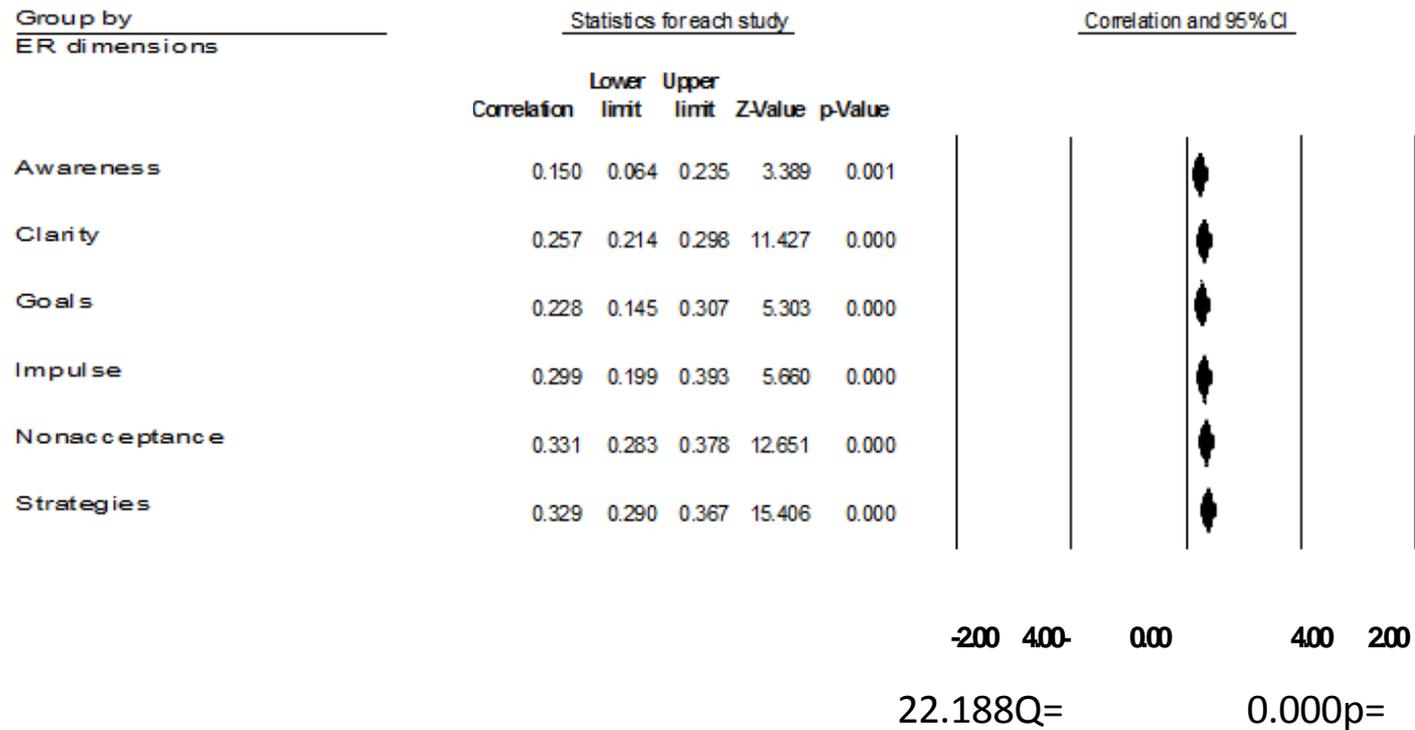
## Results – moderator analysis

Mean effect sizes for the association between different types of child maltreatment and difficulties with emotion regulation



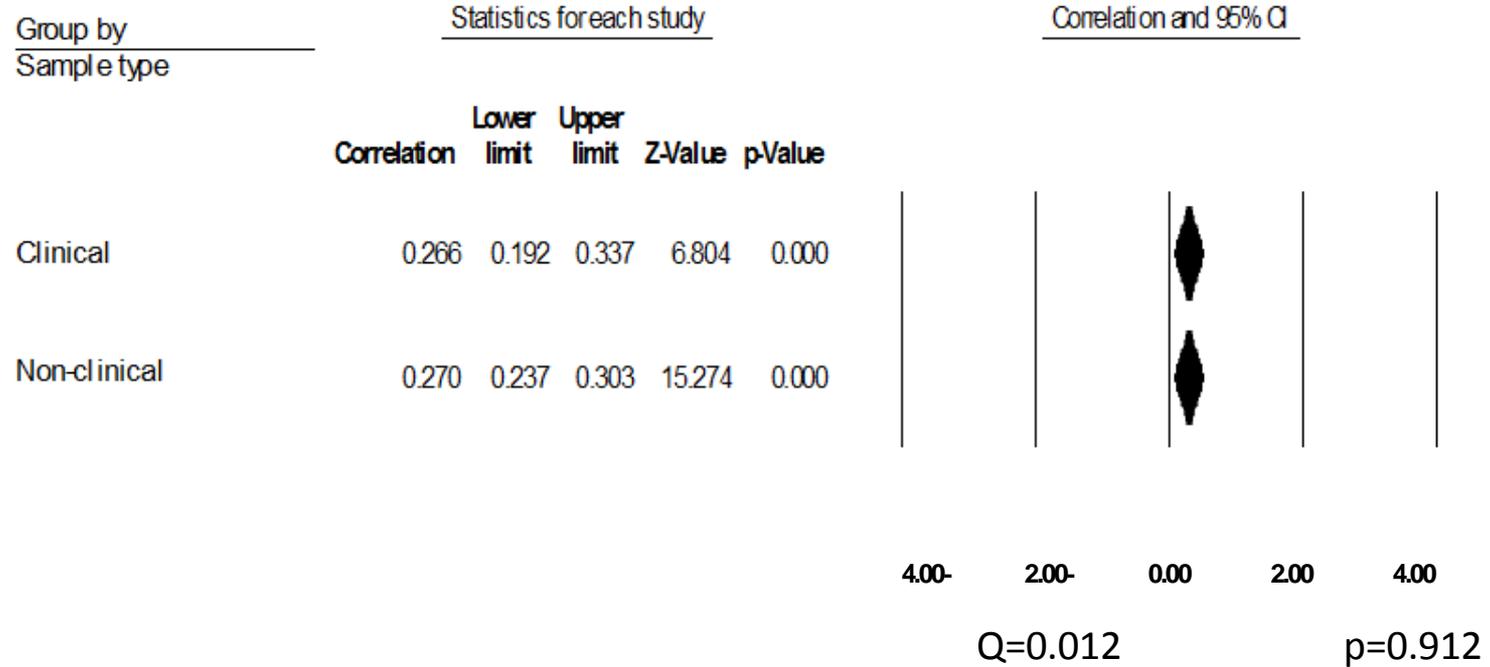
## Results – moderator analysis

Mean effect sizes for the association between emotional maltreatment and dimensions of emotion regulation



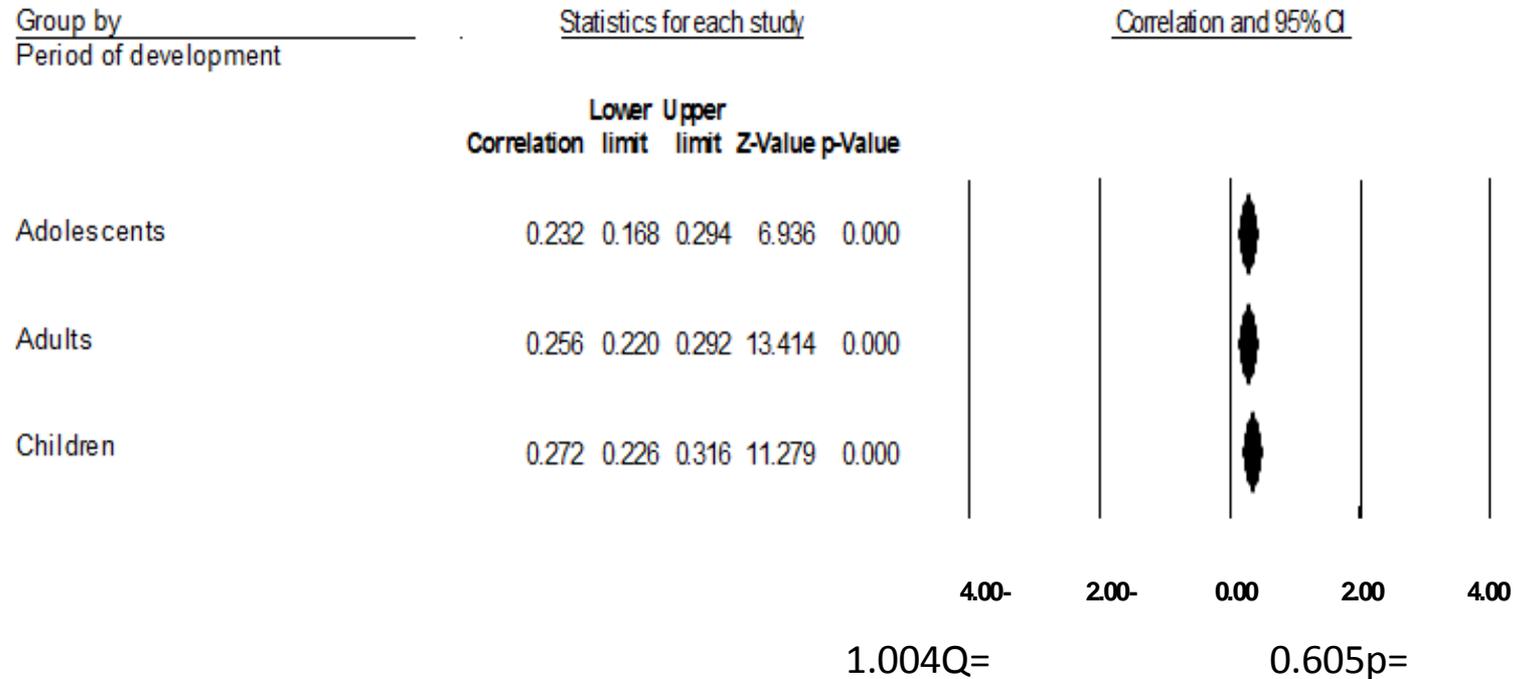
## Results – moderator analysis

Mean effect sizes for the association between different types of sample and difficulties with emotion regulation



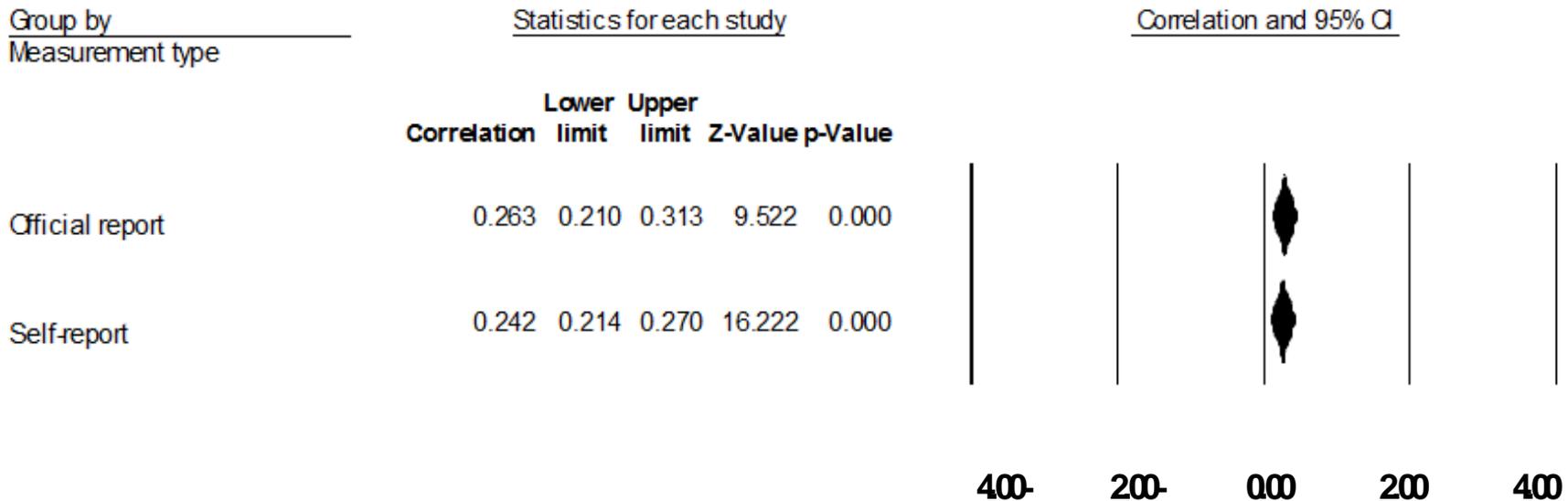
## Results – moderator analysis

Mean effect sizes for the association between different periods of development and difficulties with emotion regulation



## Results – moderator analysis

Mean effect sizes for the association between types of measurement for child maltreatment and difficulties with emotion regulation



## Conclusions

maltreatment in childhood is associated with a lifetime increase in •  
difficulties in emotion regulation

compared with other types of child maltreatment, emotional •  
maltreatment (emotional abuse and neglect) confers a higher risk  
for difficulties in emotion regulation

emotionally maltreatment is associated with specific difficulties •  
in emotion regulation

all forms of child maltreatment should be taken into account in •  
clinical practice

## :Questions

Are the higher effects of emotional maltreatment specific to emotion regulation or do they extend to other outcomes (e.g., ?(symptoms •

Could interventions targeting emotion dysregulation reduce risk for ?psychopathology in individuals with a history of maltreatment •