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**"Neglected Moms" - the Implications of Emotional Neglect in Childhood for the Transition to Motherhood**

Background: The transition to motherhood involves many challenges that require adjustment; included among them are adapting to body changes, forging a maternal identity, and attaching to the baby. Although these tasks may not be easy for any women, those who experienced emotional neglect during childhood may find them especially difficult.

Objective: The aim of the current study was to examine a model illuminating the mechanism underlying the association between childhood emotional neglect and women’s adjustment during pregnancy and the postpartum period.

Participants and Setting: Three hundred and ninety four women participated in the study, during their pregnancy (Time 1) and two months postpartum (Time 2).

Methods: Participants filled out a battery of questionnaires assessing their history of childhood emotional neglect, body experience, maternal self-efficacy, attachment to the fetus/baby, and depression.

Results: Results from Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) indicated that childhood emotional neglect was associated with depression at both Time 1 and Time 2. These associations were mediated by the body experience during pregnancy (Time 1) and motherhood (Time 2) as well as by anticipated maternal self-efficacy (Time 1) and maternal self-efficacy (Time 2). The model explained 56% of the variance of postpartum depression (Time 2).

Conclusions: These findings point to the long-term implications of childhood emotional neglect for women’s adjustment to the transition to motherhood. The underlying mechanism suggested by the research model is discussed.

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