

Interactions on Silent Mode: Parental Smartphone Distractions on Infant Mental Health

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Abstract : This interpretive phenomenological qualitative study explored potential risks related to infant mental health with parental smartphone use while caring for infants. Data were collected through nine online interviews of first-time parents with infants under one-year-old. All parents reported using their smartphone during child-bonding activities such as playtime, feeding, and sleep-time. Results indicated that smartphone distractions appear to influence the synchrony of parent-child interactions. Infants displayed physical, verbal, or emotional reactions to parents' smartphone distractions, indicating that smartphone use influences infants' behaviors. Parents shared information on how smartphones helped them with their transition into parenthood. The findings of this study provide insights helpful to inform infant mental health professionals and parents about potential developmental consequences associated with parental technofence and absent presence.

Keywords : absent presence, infant mental health, parental distractions, smartphones, technofence

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