

The Relationship between Mothers' Attachment Style, Mindful Parenting and Perception of the Child

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Abstract : Background/Aims: In early childhood, the context of development is the caregiver-child relationship. Maternal attachment style plays a major role in the intergenerational transmission of psychopathology. The aim of this study was to explore the relationship between the mothers' attachment style, mindful parenting, and perception of the child. Method: Data was collected from 144 non-clinical mothers who have a child below the age of 3 years. Mothers completed self-report questionnaires, including the following scales: a demographic questionnaire, Attachment Style Questionnaire (ASQ), Interpersonal Mindfulness in Parenting Scale (IMP), and the Mothers' Object Relations Scale (MORS-SF). K-means cluster analysis was used to identify the mothers' attachment styles. Mediation analyses with Mothers' Object Relations Scale (MORS-SF) positive emotions and dominance subscales as dependent variables, mothers' attachment style (ASQ) as an independent variable, and mindful parenting (IMP) as a mediator were conducted. Results: Four attachment styles (secure, preoccupied, fearful, dismissing) were identified. The relationship between mothers' attachment style and mindful parenting was significant ($R^2 = .51$; $F(4,139) = 36.60$; $p < .001$). Compared to the secure attachment style as a reference group, both preoccupied and dismissing styles were related to lower levels of mindful parenting; however, this relationship was the strongest in case of fearful style. In mediation analysis the direct effects of mothers' attachment style on the perception of the child were not significant (MORS positive emotions: $R^2 = .29$; $F(5,138) = 11.22$; $p < .001$; MORS dominance: $R^2 = .39$ $F(5,138) = 17.54$, $p < .001$). However, indirect effects through mindful parenting were significant; higher levels of mindful parenting were associated with higher levels of MORS positive emotions and lower levels of MORS dominance. Conclusions: These findings suggest that attachment styles are related to the perception of the child through mindful parenting. Mindfulness-based parenting training might be useful in case of attachment-related problems to improve the parent-child relationship.

Keywords : mindfulness, mindful parenting, attachment, perception

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