



PREDICTORS OF VERBAL AGGRESSION TOWARDS INFANTS

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*Disclaimer: Sensitive Topics

PARENTAL VERBAL AGGRESSION

- **Maltreatment:** harm or risk of harm to a dependent minor
- **Verbal Aggression:** yelling and emotional manipulation/humiliation
 - Type of child maltreatment
 - Falls under emotional abuse
 - High prevalence behaviour among parents

BACKGROUND

IMPACT OF ABUSE

- Mental health issues
- Emotional dysfunction
- Internalizing and externalizing disorders

THEORIES OF VERBAL AGGRESSION

- Limited re verbal aggression
- Built on theories of physical aggression

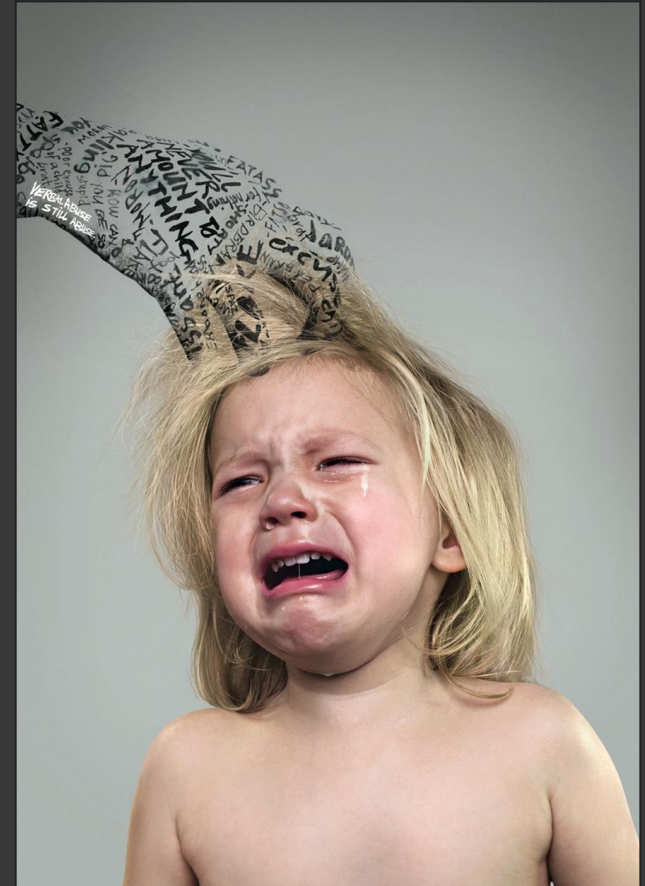
RISK FACTORS FOR VERBAL AGGRESSION

- Limited re verbal aggression
- Child and parental factors
- Environmental factors



MINIMAL RESEARCH ON...

1. Verbal aggression overall
2. Predictors for verbal aggression
3. Infant population
4. Total population (i.e. limited to at-risk populations)



CURRENT STUDY

- **Sample:** English-speaking postpartum mothers in BC ($N= 388$)
- **Methods:**
 - Questionnaires
 - Administered twice post-partum
 - Primarily online
 - Abuse assessed anonymously
- **Objective:** Assess risk factors for maternal verbal aggression towards infants
- **Predictors:**
 - Depression
 - Sleep
 - Social support
 - Parenting beliefs and attitudes (CAPI)

DEPRESSION



- 5-7 weeks: $r(344) = .203^{**}, p < .001$
- 6-9 months: $r(387) = .188^{**}, p < .001$

SLEEP



- 5-7 weeks: $r(344) = .093^*, p = .084$
- 6-9 months: $r(388) = .178^{**}, p < .001$

PREDICTORS

SOCIAL SUPPORT



- 5-7 weeks: $r(342) = -.130^*, p = .016$
- 6-9 months: $r(388) = -.159^*, p = .002$

CAPI



- Total Abuse Scale (6-9 months):
 $r(235) = .128^*, p = .049$

SIGNIFICANCE AND CONCLUSION

- Increase research on verbal abuse and infants
 - More focus on predictors instead of consequences
- Prevention efforts for this sensitive population

RESOURCES

- Call 9-1-1 if immediate risk to a child is suspected
- Call 1-800-668-6868 for the kids help phone line
- Call 1-800-663-9122 for the BC Helpline for Children
- UBC Campus Lightbox

FURTHER READING

- Black, D. A., Heyman, R. E., & Smith Slep, A. M. (2001). Risk factors for child physical abuse. *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 6*(2), 121-188. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1359-1789\(00\)00021-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1359-1789(00)00021-5)
- Stith, S. M., Liu, T., Davies, L. C., Boykin, E. L., Alder, M. C., Harris, J. M., Som, A., McPherson, M., & Dees, J. E. M. E. G. (2009). Risk factors in child maltreatment: A meta-analytic review of the literature. *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 14*(1), 13-29. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2006.03.006>

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