

Unravelling child maltreatment: What are the prevention ingredients?

Lenneke Alink

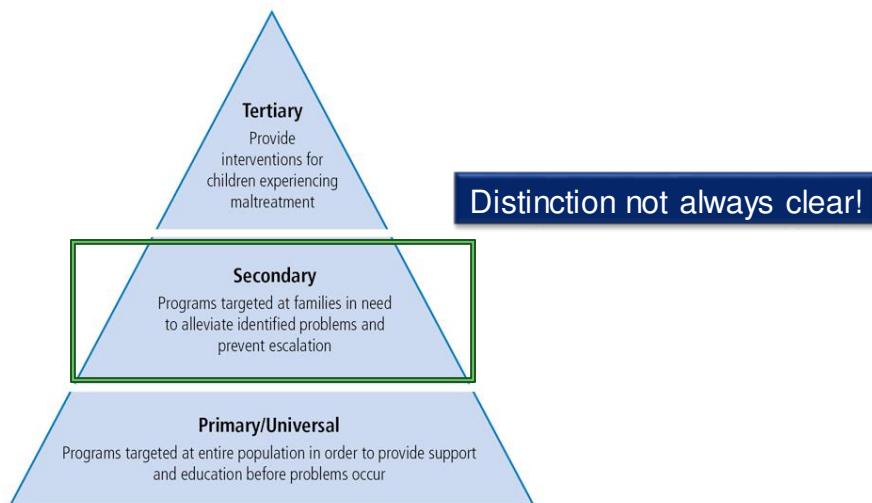
January 29, 2020



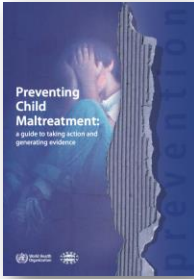
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What is prevention?



Australian institute of family studies; Bromfield & Holzer, 2008

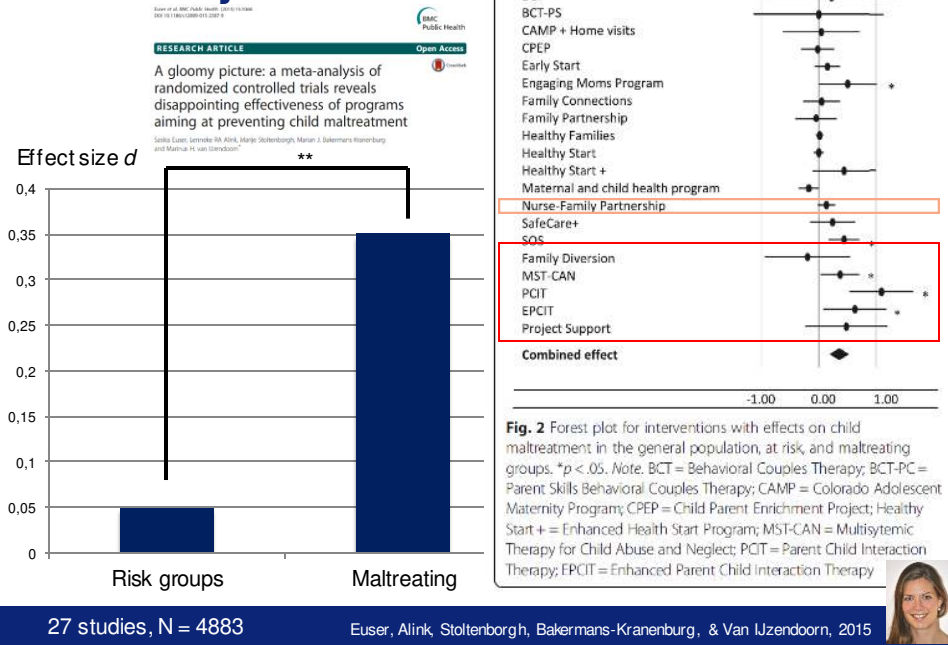


Level of intervention	Developmental Stage			
	Infanthood (<3 years of age)	Childhood (3–11 years of age)	Adolescence (12–17 years of age)	Adulthood (≥18 years of age)
Societal and community	Implementing legal reform and human rights <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Translating the Convention on the Rights of the Child into national laws Strengthening police and judicial systems Promoting social, economic and cultural rights 			
	Introducing beneficial social and economic policies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing early childhood education and care Ensuring universal primary and secondary education Taking measures to reduce unemployment and mitigate its adverse consequences Investing in good social protection systems 			
	Changing cultural and social norms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changing cultural and social norms that support violence against children and adults 			
	Reducing economic inequalities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tackling poverty Reducing income and gender inequalities 			
	Environmental risk factor reduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reducing the availability of alcohol Monitoring levels of lead and removing environmental toxins 			
				Shelters and crisis centres for battered women and their children Training health care professionals to identify and refer adult survivors of child maltreatment
Relationship	Home visitation programmes Training in parenting	Training in parenting		
Individual	Reducing unintended pregnancies Increasing access to prenatal and postnatal services	Training children to recognize and avoid potentially abusive situations		

Can we prevent child maltreatment?



Meta-analytic evidence



Meta-analytic evidence

Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review (2018) 21:171–202
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10567-017-0250-5>



Identifying Effective Components of Child Maltreatment Interventions: A Meta-analysis

Claudia E. van der Put¹ · Mark Assink¹ · Jeanne Gubbels¹ · Noëlle F. Boekhout van Solinge¹

- Curative interventions targeting maltreating parents: small/medium effect ($d = .364$)
- Preventive interventions targeting at-risk families/general population: small effect ($d = .263$)
- Somewhat larger effect sizes than Euser et al.: broader inclusion (also non-RCTs and interventions aiming at reducing risk factors for CM)

Advice report Dutch Health Council



- Role of attachment in preventing (consequences of) child maltreatment
- Not enough evidence for ability of attachment-based interventions to prevent child maltreatment

Some effective attachment based interventions



Available online at www.sciencedirect.com

ScienceDirect

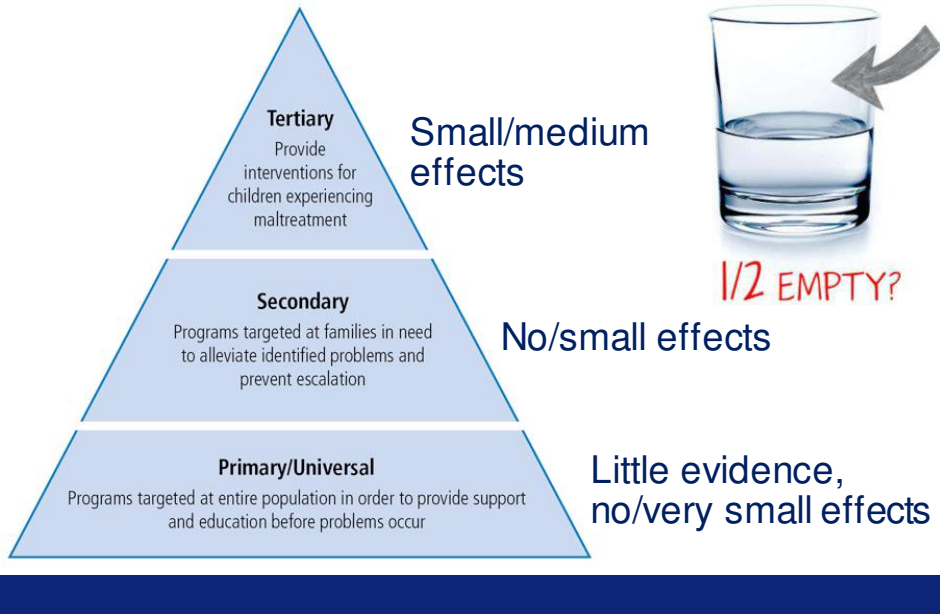
Current Opinion in
Psychology

Child maltreatment: the central roles of parenting capacities and attachment
Chantal Cyr^{1,2} and Lenneke RA Alink^{3,4}

- Attachment Video-feedback Intervention (AVI; Cyr et al., 2015)
- Video-feedback Intervention to Promote Positive Parenting (VIPP; Juffer et al., 2017) www.vippleiden.com
- Attachment and Biobehavioral Catch-up (ABC; Dozier & Bernard, 2016)
- Parent–Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT; Thomas & Zimmer-Gembeck)

Mostly used as secondary/tertiary prevention

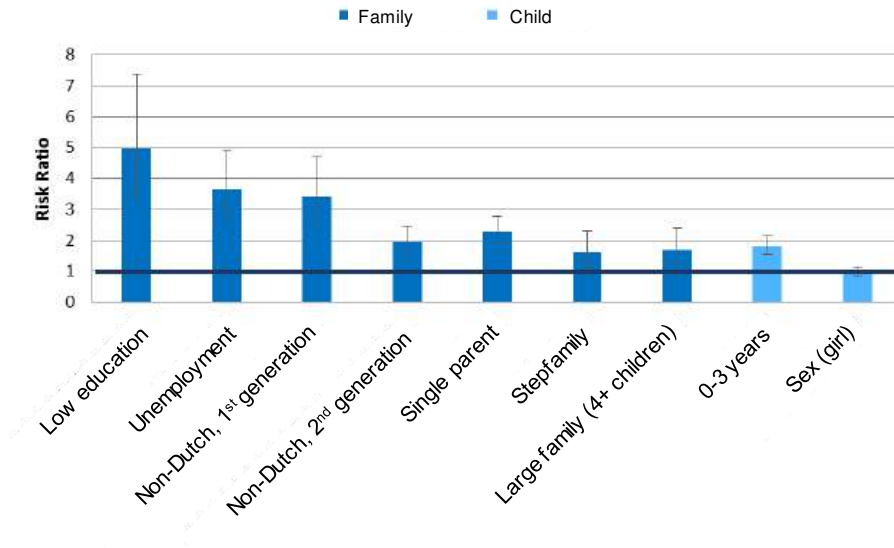
Can we prevent child maltreatment?



Room for improvement



Risk factors



Alink, Prevoo, Van Berkel, Linting, Klein Velderman, & Pannebakker, 2018

Intergenerational transmission

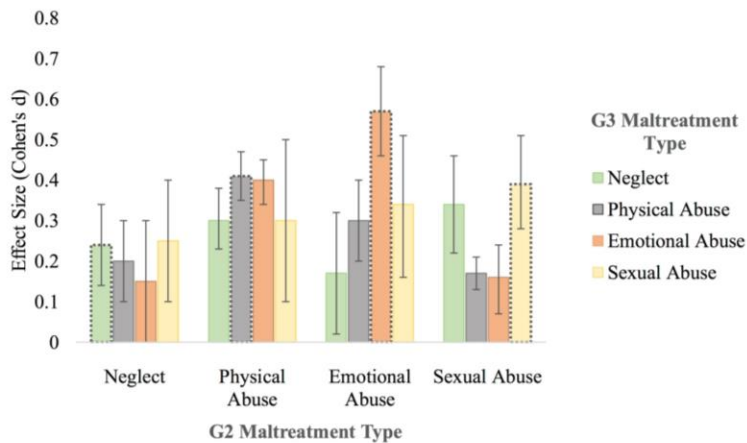


Figure 3. Comparison of Homotypic and Heterotypic Transmission Effect Sizes from G2 to G3 with 85% confidence intervals.

Note. Homotypic continuity for each maltreatment type is indicated by dotted line.

Madigan, Cyr, Eirich, Fearon, Ly, Rash, Poole, & Alink, 2019

More risk factors

Table 1
Results for the Overall Mean Effect Sizes of the 24 Risk Domains.

Domain of risk factors	# Studies	# ES	Fisher's z (SE)	95% CI	Sig. mean z (p)	Mean r	% Var. at level 1	Level 2 variance	% Var. at level 2	Level 3 variance	% Var. at level 3
Family level											
Parents not married	5	6	.293 (.099)	0.040, 0.546	.031*	.285	.65	.000	.00	.046	99.35
Physical violence in the home environment	6	8	.200 (.048)	0.087, 0.313	.004**	.197	4.43	.016*	95.57	.000	.00
Large family size (2 or more children)	17	18	-.188 (.040)	-0.105, 0.272	< .001***	-.186	.36	.021***	99.64	.000	.00
Low family SES	19	28	-.168 (.052)	-0.062, 0.275	.003**	-.166	.18	.041***	69.48	.018	30.34
Child is not living with two biological parents	14	17	-.121 (.030)	0.057, 0.184	< .001***	-.120	3.39	.008***	85.64	.001	10.97
Problematic family behavior and cognitions	8	27	.110 (.038)	0.032, 0.188	.007**	.110	15.80	.002**	16.16	.008**	68.03
Low social support/low social network	10	20	.037 (.036)	-0.038, 0.112	.313	.037	13.52	.000	.00	.011***	86.48
Parental level											
Parental history of antisocial behavior/criminal offending	2	4	-.391 (.070)	0.168, 0.615	.011*	-.372	1.98	.001***	13.38	.006	84.63
Parental history of mental/psychiatric problems	4	13	.265 (.067)	0.118, 0.411	.002**	.259	.53	.025***	87.13	.005	12.35
Parental problems	2	5	-.249 (.134)	-0.122, 0.620	.136	-.244	.23	.003***	7.86	.034*	92.11
Low parental education	19	21	-.233 (.041)	0.147, 0.318	< .001***	-.230	1.69	.019***	67.09	.008	31.83
Parental mental/physical problems	6	22	-.210 (.071)	0.063, 0.357	.007**	-.207	1.62	.017***	46.31	.020*	52.67
Parental history of abuse	7	21	-.164 (.036)	0.109, 0.258	< .001***	-.182	3.81	.024***	90.19	.000	.00
Parental age factors	15	18	-.141 (.036)	0.065, 0.217	.001**	-.140	2.51	.000	.00	.014*	97.49
Parental unemployment	6	7	-.137 (.070)	-0.034, 0.307	.067*	-.136	7.71	.000	.00	.025	92.29
Parental substance (ab)use	4	5	-.128 (.091)	-0.125, 0.381	.234	-.127	1.59	.004	10.94	.029	87.47
Parental adverse childhood experiences	5	11	-.127 (.060)	-0.008, 0.262	.062*	-.126	14.97	.032**	85.03	.000	.00
Adverse parental cognitions regarding pregnancy	4	5	-.021 (.036)	-0.080, 0.122	.584	-.021	4.65	.005***	95.35	.000	.00
Child level											
Child being non-Caucasian	6	13	-.219 (.070)	0.067, 0.372	.009**	-.216	.34	.006***	25.46	.019*	74.20
Perinatal problems	5	8	-.187 (.039)	0.095, 0.279	.002**	-.185	11.85	.003	57.28	.004	50.87
Child's mental/physical/behavioral problems	8	12	-.173 (.044)	0.077, 0.270	.002**	-.171	9.80	.002	14.31	.010*	75.89
Child being female	9	10	-.062 (.032)	-0.071, 0.075	.054	-.062	4.18	.002	37.41	.003	58.41
Child being younger*	8	8	-.045 (.085)	-0.247, 0.157	.618	-.045	9.63	.023	45.40	.023	45.48
Other	5	7	-.129 (.062)	-0.023, 0.281	.064*	-.128	.81	.000	1.33	.018*	97.86

Note. # Studies = number of studies; ES = number of effect sizes; SE = standard error; CI = confidence interval for Fisher's z; sig. = level of significance; mean sig. z = mean effect size z (Fisher's z); r = mean effect size (Pearson's correlation); % var. = percentage of variance; Level 2 variance = variance between effect sizes within studies; Level 3 variance = variance between studies.
*p < .10; **p < .05; ***p < .01; ****p < .001.

Mulder et al. 2018. Risk factors for neglect

Focus of secondary prevention

Enduring vulnerability factors

Transient challengers

(Cicchetti & Rizley, 1981)

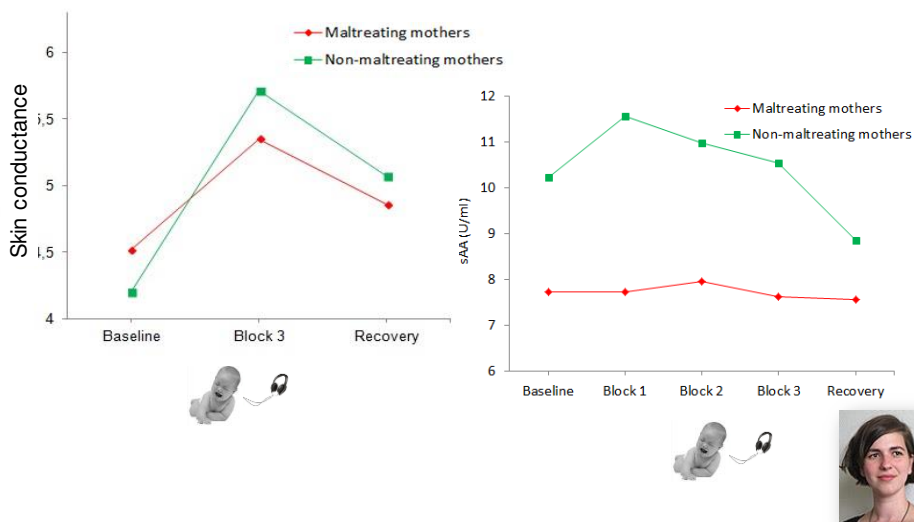
- Who should prevention be aimed at?
- E.g., low SES, single parents, parents with own experience of maltreatment
- Risk: stigmatization and blind eye for maltreating families without risk factors
- Possible targets for prevention/intervention
- But: causal role needs to be confirmed

Mechanisms: some possible targets

- Parent-child relationship
- What goes wrong?
 - Stress regulation
 - Emotion processing
 - Attributions



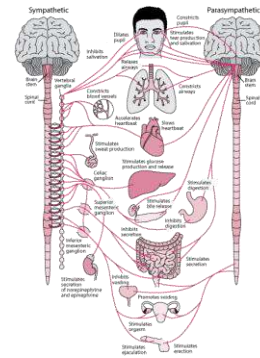
Hyporeactivity



Reijman et al., 2014, Child Maltreatment; Reijman et al., 2014, Child Psychiatry Hum Dev

Stress and maltreatment: meta-analyses

- 11 studies ($N = 524$) baseline
- 11 studies ($N = 503$) reactivity
- Maltreating parents significantly higher stress levels at baseline
- No significant effects for stress *reactivity*
- Mainly abuse!



Reijman, Bakermans-Kranenburg, Hiraoka, Crouch, Milner, Alink, & Van IJzendoorn, 2016

Emotion recognition

Psychology of Violence
2015, Vol. 10, No. 3, 158-163

© 2014 American Psychological Association
1076-898X/15/\$12.00 DOI: 10.1037/xap0000014

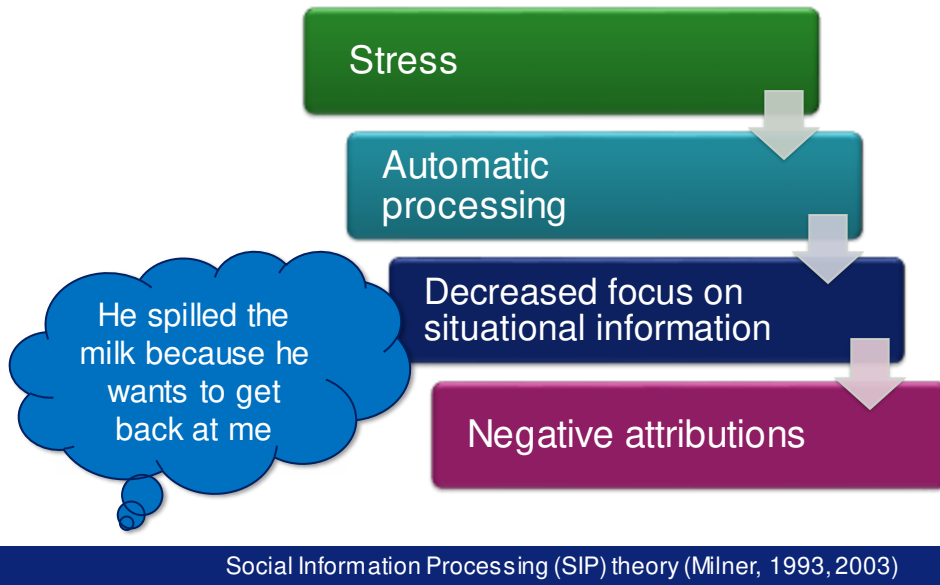
Facial Emotion Recognition Accuracy and Child Physical Abuse:
An Experiment and a Meta-Analysis

Michael F. Wagner, Joel S. Milner, Randy J. McCarthy, Julie L. Crouch, Thomas R. McCanne,
and John J. Skowronski
Center for the Study of Family Violence and Sexual Assault, Northern Illinois University

- Meta-analysis
- More child facial emotion recognition errors by parents at risk for abuse and abusive parents make compared to comparison parents



Stress and negative attributions



PACT: Parental Attributions of Child behavior Task

Ambiguous situations with young children

Do you think this is...

naughty
pitiable
irritating
cute?



Would you...

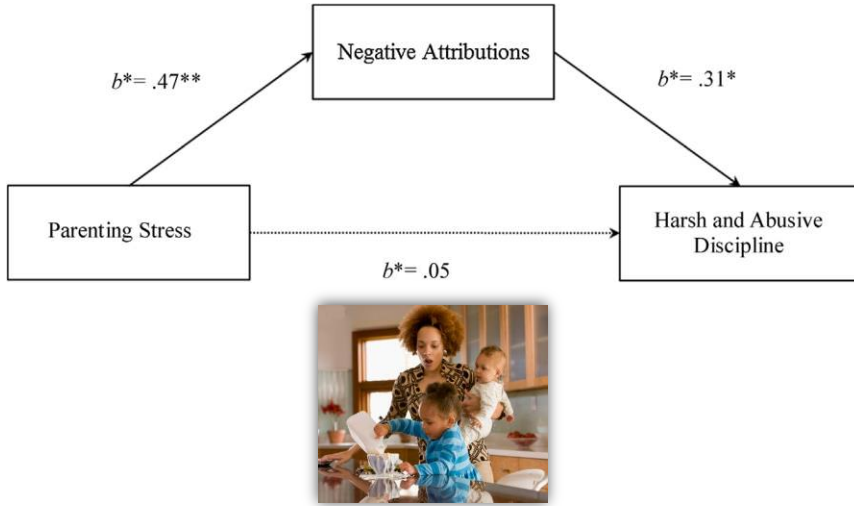
become angry
comfort
punish
smile?



Beckerman, Van Berkel, Mesman, & Alink (2017). Child Abuse & Neglect

Stress and negative attributions

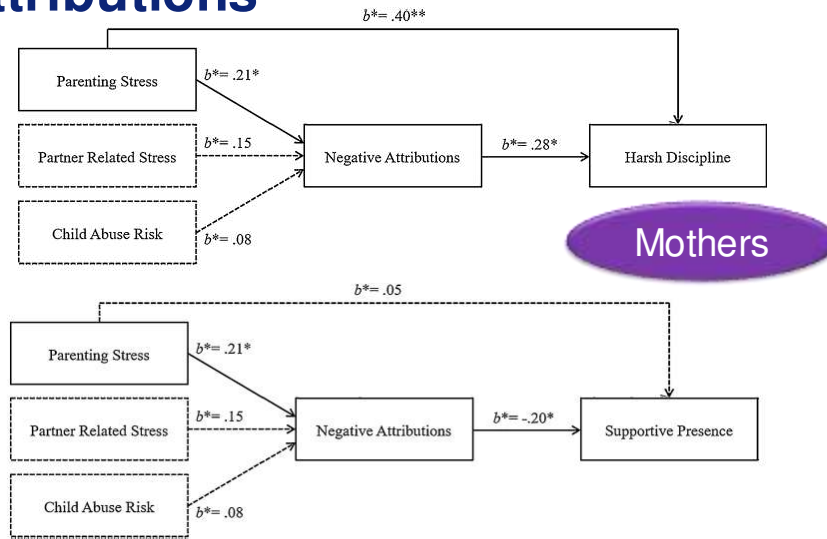
Child Abuse & Neglect
 Research article
 The role of negative parental attributions in the associations between daily stressors, maltreatment history, and harsh and abusive discipline
 Marlene Beckerman, Sheila K. van Berckel, Judi Mesman, Inezwie K.A. Alink



Beckerman, Van Berckel, Mesman, & Alink, (2017). Child Abuse & Neglect

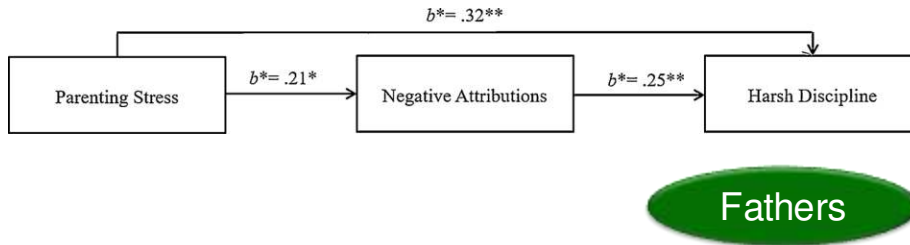
Stress and negative attributions

Child Abuse & Neglect
 Research article
 Negative parental attributions mediate associations between risk factors and dysfunctional parenting: A replication and extension
 Marlene Beckerman, Sheila K. van Berckel, Judi Mesman, Inezwie K.A. Alink



Beckerman, Van Berckel, Mesman, & Alink, (2018). Child Abuse & Neglect

Stress and negative attributions

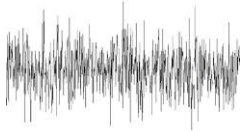


Beckerman, Van Berckelaer, Mesman, & Alink, (2018). Child Abuse & Neglect

A note about causality

So far:
Correlational, not causal!

Causality?



- No main effects for white noise and cognitive load for moms and dads
- Only effect of cognitive load for moms with high reported risk (stress and child abuse potential)
- Only evidence for causality in high risk group

Other examples of causality – current research

- Manipulating household chaos
- Manipulating stress
- Translation to “real world”: family-based intervention in risk groups



So...

- Possible meaningful mechanisms within parent-child interactions:

Parental experienced stress and stress regulation

Deficits in recognizing emotions

Negative attributions

What's next?

- Can we increase effectiveness of prevention/intervention?
- Focus on mechanisms → individualized approach
- More causal research to make sure we are targeting the right thing



Thank you!



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