**Distribution Agreement**

In presenting this thesis as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for a degree from Emory University, I hereby grant to Emory University and its agents the non-exclusive license to archive, make accessible, and display my thesis in whole or in part in all forms of media, now or hereafter know, including display on the World Wide Web. I understand that I may select some access restrictions as part of the online submission of this thesis. I retain all ownership rights to the copyright of the thesis. I also retain the right to use in future works (such as articles or books) all or part of this thesis.

Jessie L. Rector 3/30/12

Associations between Maternal Depression and Infant Temperament: Investigations of a Transactional Model

by

Jessie Rector

Sherryl Goodman, Ph.D.  
Adviser

Psychology Department

Sherryl Goodman, Ph.D.

Adviser

Philippe Rochat, Ph.D.

Committee Member

Sean Meighoo, Ph.D.

Committee Member

2012

Associations between Maternal Depression and Infant Temperament: Investigations of a Transactional Model

By

Jessie L. Rector

Sherryl Goodman, Ph.D.

Adviser

An abstract of  
a thesis submitted to the Faculty of Emory College of Arts and Sciences  
of Emory University in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements of the degree of  
Bachelor of Arts with Honors

Psychology

2012

Abstract

Associations between Maternal Depression and Infant Temperament: Investigations of a Transactional Model

By Jessie L. Rector

Maternal depression, both prenatal and postpartum, has been consistently shown to predict infant temperament ([McGrath, Records, & Rice, 2008](#_ENREF_17); [Sugawara, Kitamura, Toda, & Shima, 1999](#_ENREF_26)). Additionally, few studies have examined the contribution of infant temperament to maternal depression. Previous literature has shown longitudinal correlations, but has not controlled for the continuity of depression and temperament over time. We investigated associations between maternal depression and infant temperament over the first year of the infant’s life, while controlling for the stability of these factors. Additionally, we incorporated both prenatal and postpartum depression in order to further address this continuity. Maternal depression was operationalized as a mean of monthly BDI-II scores during the prenatal period, while BDI-II scores were used at three, six, and 12 months. Infant temperament was operationalized as infant negative affectivity, as assessed via the IBQ-R. Prenatal depression was found through regression analysis to be predictive of infant negative affectivity at three months (p<.001) and correlated with infant negative affectivity at six (r=.297) and 12 (r=.263) months. While the postpartum transactional model pathways proposed and tested through hierarchical regression analyses were not supported, there is limited correlational support for the influence of postpartum maternal depression on infant negative affectivity. The continuity of maternal depression and infant negative affectivity over the first year was shown. This study suggests that postpartum maternal depression does not predict infant negative affectivity above and beyond what would be predicted by previous measures of infant negative affectivity. Future directions for longitudinal models examining the relationship between maternal depression and infant temperament should examine further subscales of the IBQ-R measures of infant temperament. Additionally, further research into the role of perceptions versus behavioral constructs on infant temperament should be compared.

Associations between Maternal Depression and Infant Temperament: Investigations of a Transactional Model

By

Jessie L. Rector

Sherryl Goodman, Ph.D.

Adviser

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Emory College of Arts and Sciences  
of Emory University in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements of the degree of  
Bachelor of Arts with Honors

Psychology

2012

Acknowledgements

The author gratefully acknowledges the contributions of Sherryl Goodman, Ph.D. and Lisa Hayes, Ph.D. to this paper. This research was supported by National Institute of Mental Health grant number 1P50MH58922-01A1.

Table of Contents

Introduction 1

Temperament 2

Maternal Depression as a Predictor of Infant Temperament 4

Infant temperament as a predictor of maternal depression 8

Maternal depression, parenting, and infant temperament 8

Bidirectional associations between maternal depression and infant temperament 10

Transactional model 11

Present Study 12

Method 14

Participants 14

Procedure 15

Measures 16

Planned Analysis 20

Results 21

Descriptive and Preliminary Analyses 21

Hypothesis Testing 23

Discussion 27

Strengths and weaknesses 30

Future directions 31

Conclusions 31

References 33

Tables and Figures 37