F2.3: Effects of a Blended Infant Massage-Parenting Enhancement Program on Recovering Substance-Abusing Mothers’ Parenting Stress and Infant Safety

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Abstract:
Introduction: Substance- abusing mothers (SAMs) are a special population on the rise, associated with multiple co-morbidities. Exposed to both biological and environmental risks,
children of SAMs thus experience double jeopardy. The purpose of this study was to test the effects of blending Infant Massage (IM) into a systematic Parenting Enhancement Program (PEP) on maternal and infant health outcomes. The study utilized two levels of intervention: the blended IMPEP and the PEP. A third non-intervention group comprised the control. The study was conducted in two comprehensive drug abuse rehabilitation centers in southeast Florida on a sample of 138 recovering SAM-infant pairs, composed of 37% Black, 17% Hispanic, and 41% White.

**Method(s):** The study used a prospective, randomized, controlled three-group design with repeated measures over time (T1-T3), comparing the efficacy of IMPEP vs. PEP vs. Con (control) conditions, as well as comparing pre- and post-intervention outcomes within each study group. The data were collected at baseline (T1), then at Week 6 (T2), and Week 12 (T3) via self-administered questionnaires or structured interviews (Abidin Parenting Stress Index (PSI), Infant Safety Questionnaire, Background Information Questionnaire). Blood pressure (BP) and waist-to-hip ratios were taken, also, to measure stress. The data were analyzed by descriptive statistics and one-way ANOVA.

**Results:** The findings demonstrated that the study groups did not differ in PSI, BP, or infant safety mean scores at baseline. Significant differences in outcome measures among study groups were depicted at T2 and T3, in favor of the IMPEP group, which also demonstrated the largest within-group changes over time.

**Discussion & Conclusions:** Infant massage served to reinforce the impact of a parenting enhancement program, specifically on stress and infant safety. Study findings may contribute to the knowledge base of family preservation and health enhancement among high-risk mothers and babies. In turn, maternal-child health practitioners, public health professionals, and substance abuse service providers may use data generated from the IMPEP study to design evidence-based client-tailored parenting programs, which blends IM as both a health promotion and a therapeutic intervention.

**Abstract History:**
This abstract has not been presented or accepted for presentation in whole or in part at the SNRS or other scientific meeting.

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