The role of dyadic coping in the transition to parenthood

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BACKGROUND

Transition to parenthood

critical and potentially stressful event

Individual tasks

Relational tasks

(Cutrona et al., 2005; Donato, 2014; Lawrence et al., 2008)
Individual well-being VERSUS Individual distress

Relational well-being VERSUS Relational distress
BACKGROUND

Empirical and clinical implications...

- **individual** disease
  - psychological disease

- **relational** disease
  - marital quality

... negative effects on the children well-being
(Grigoriadis et al., 2013; Stein et al., 2014)
BACKGROUND

COPING STRATEGIES

Individual coping

(Berghuis & Stanton, 2002; Coyne & Smith, 1991; O’Brien & DeLongis, 1997)

Dyadic coping

(Bodenmann, 2005; Bodenmann, Meuwly, & Kayser, 2011)
Dyadic coping (DC)

(a) “the coping efforts of one partner in order to support the other in times of stress”
(b) “the common attempts of both partners to cope together with a shared stressor” (Bodenmann, 2005)

Positive DC  Negative DC
BACKGROUND

Positive dyadic coping

Individual well-being
(Hausler et al., 2016; Regan et al., 2014; Rottman et al., 2015)

Relational well-being
(Bodenmann, Pihet, & Kayser, 2006; Donato et al., 2014; Falconier et al., 2015; Fuenfhausen & Cashwell, 2015)
AIMS

1. to explore *dyadic coping styles* during pregnancy in the two partners, specifically targeting aspects of *congruence* and *incongruence*;

2. to test if dyadic coping is a predictor of:
   - individual variable (depression)
   - interpersonal variable (couples adjustment)
AIMS

1. to explore *dyadic coping styles* during pregnancy in the two partners, specifically targeting aspects of *congruence* and *incongruence*;

2. to test if dyadic coping is a predictor of:
   - individual variable (depression)
   - interpersonal variable (couples adjustment);
Method Cross sectional research design

Participants
78 primiparous couples
In Northern Italy

Inclusion criteria:
• 32\textsuperscript{nd} - 37\textsuperscript{th} week of pregnancy
• in a stable couple relationship;
• with a spontaneous and planned conception;
• fluent in Italian;
• not having a multiple pregnancy;
• not having a pregnancy with serious complications (for mother-to-be and for the fetus).
Mean Age = 33,10 years
Range = 24-49
SD = 5,85

Mean Age = 35,58 years
Range = 23-52
SD = 6,26
### Mean Age and Occupations

#### Female Group
- **Mean Age:** 33.10 years
- **Range:** 24-49
- **SD:** 5.85

#### Male Group
- **Mean Age:** 35.58 years
- **Range:** 23-52
- **SD:** 6.26

#### Occupations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OCCUPATION</th>
<th>Female Group</th>
<th>Male Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>23.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White collar job/teacher</td>
<td>85.5%</td>
<td>44.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blu collar job</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>24.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Instruments

- **Personal information and anamnestic questionnaire**
- **Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale** – EPDS – 
  (Cox et al., 1987; Benvenuti et al., 1999; Loscalzo et al., 2015);
- **Dyadic Adjustment Scale** – DAS – 
  (Spanier, 1976; Gentili et al., 2002);
- **Bodenmann’s Dyadic Coping Questionnaire** – BDCQ – 
  (Bodenmann, 1997, 2000; Donato et al., 2006).
COMMUNICATION

EMOTION-FOCUSED

PROBLEM-FOCUSED

DELEGATED

NEGATIVE

COMMON

DYADIC COPING

OTHER PERCEPTION

Satisfaction

Efficacy

I_17
I_18
I_19
I_28
I_21
I_22
I_25
I_24
I_31
I_29
I_32
I_23
I_26
I_27
I_28
I_30
I_33
I_34
I_35
I_36
I_37
I_38
I_39
I_40
I_41
Data analysis

- Descriptive statistics
- Paired-samples t test
- Actor-Partner Interdependence Model (APIM)
  (Kenny, 1996; Kenny & Cook, 1999)
## Results

### Descriptive statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>WOMEN M (SD)</th>
<th>MEN M (SD)</th>
<th>T value (p)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>EPDS</strong></td>
<td>7.49 (4.15)</td>
<td>4.93 (3.52)</td>
<td>4.62 (p &lt; .000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DAS</strong></td>
<td>125.27 (13.17)</td>
<td>124.90 (13.36)</td>
<td>.34 (p &gt; .05)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyadic Coping</td>
<td>WOMEN (M (SD))</td>
<td>MEN (M (SD))</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self perceptions</td>
<td>Other perceptions</td>
<td>Self perceptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL SCORE</td>
<td>112.29 (10.17)</td>
<td>112.87 (13.35)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress communication</td>
<td>3.53 (.72)</td>
<td>2.81 (.63)</td>
<td>3.18 (.88)</td>
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<td>Emotion-focused Supportive DC</td>
<td>3.67 (.70)</td>
<td>3.87 (.75)</td>
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<td>Problem-focus Supportive DC</td>
<td>1.46 (.83)</td>
<td>1.73 (.92)</td>
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<td>Delegated DC</td>
<td>2.74 (.60)</td>
<td>2.67 (.73)</td>
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<td>2.62 (.54)</td>
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<td>DC Satisfaction</td>
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Actor and partner effects of dyadic coping (TOTAL SCORE) as predictor of EPDS

**Woman**
Dyadic coping (TOT)

**Partner**
Dyadic coping (TOT)

\[ \beta = -.17 \]  
Actor

\[ \beta = -.11 \]  
partner

\[ \beta = -.17 \]  
Actor

\[ \beta = -.11 \]  
partner

APIM with distinguishable dyads regression model.

- \( p < .05 \)
- \( **p < .01 \)
- \( ***p < .001 \)

**standardized coefficients**
Actor and partner effects of dyadic coping \((TOTAL \ SCORE)\) as predictor of DAS

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Woman} \\
\text{Dyadic coping (TOT)} \\
\beta = .23^{**} \\
\text{Partner} \\
\text{Dyadic coping (TOT)} \\
\beta = .17^{*}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\beta = .17^{*} \\
\text{Actor} \\
\beta = .23^{**} \\
\text{Partner} \\
\text{DAS} \\
\text{Woman} \\
\text{DAS}
\end{align*}
\]

APIM with distinguishable dyads regression model.

- \(p<.05, \quad ** p<.01, \quad *** p<.001\)
- **standardized coefficients**
Actor and partner effects of **Common DC** as predictors of **DAS**

APIM with distinguishable dyads regression model.
- \( p < .05 \), **\( p < .01 \), ***\( p < .001 \)
- **standardized coefficients**

\[ \beta = .34^{**} \]
\[ \beta = .31^{***} \]
\[ \beta = .34^{**} \]
Actor and partner effects of **Satisfaction** about DC as predictors of **DAS**

**Woman** satisfaction

**Partner** Satisfaction

APIM with distinguishable dyads regression model.
- \( p < .05, \quad ** p < .01, \quad *** p < .001 \)
- **standardized coefficients**
APIM with distinguishable dyads regression model.

- $p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$
- **standardized coefficients**
PARTNERS’ PERCEIVED DYADIC COPING → HIGH AND CONGRUENT
CONCLUSIONS

Transition to parenthood - pregnancy

DYADIC COPING  →  COUPLE ADJUSTMENT
CONCLUSIONS

Transition to parenthood - pregnancy

DYADIC COPING

INDIVIDUAL WELL-BEING (DEPRESSION)
FURTHER RESEARCH

LOGITUDINAL DESIGNS

DYADIC COPING (PREGNANCY)  
COUPLE ADJUSTMENT (AFTER BIRTH)
INDIVIDUAL WELL-BEING (AFTER BIRTH)
FURTHER RESEARCH

LOGITUDINAL DESIGNS

«AT RISK» PREGNANCIES

DYADIC COPING (PREGNANCY)

COUPLE ADJUSTMENT (AFTER BIRTH)

INDIVIDUAL WELL-BEING (AFTER BIRTH)

DYADIC COPING (PREGNANCY)

COUPLE ADJUSTMENT (PREGNANCY)

INDIVIDUAL WELL-BEING (PREGNANCY)
Thank you

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