The Effects of Infant Abdominal Massage on Postnatal Stress Level among Chinese Parents in Hong Kong - A Pilot Study

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INTRODUCTION

1. Maternal psychological distress is one of the most common perinatal complications, affecting up to 25% of pregnant and postpartum women.
2. Parenting stress which involved both parents has shown to be interrelated with depressive symptoms.
3. Parent training and support programs can reduce child behavior problems and maternal anxiety and stress.
4. Training parents on infant massage is simple and can be a low cost and efficient intervention in primary care for improving postpartum depression or parental stress.

METHODS

- A single arm pilot study was conducted on 8 parents (with 4 couples and 4 mothers) with babies less than 1 year-old.
- The Chinese version of the Parenting Stress Index (PSI-SF) (4th version) was used to assess the parental stress level of parents.
- Data was collected at baseline and 4 weeks after baseline.
- Self-reporting data has also been collected on the compliance of the intervention and also if the intervention can help improve their babies' sleep quality and problem of colic.
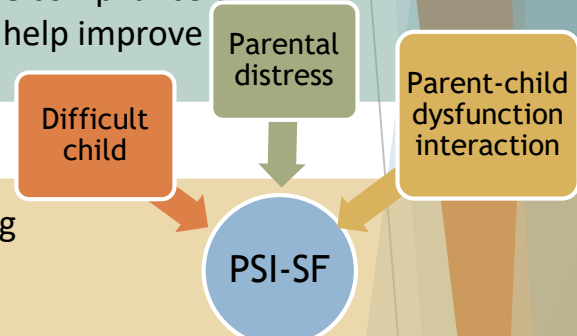
RESULTS

- All of the 8 parents (100%) completed the training class and questionnaires at week 0 and week 4.
- Demographic data was shown in Table 1.
- Parents with compliance of intervention equals or greater than 50%, a decrease in total PSI-SF and all subscales was found. (Table 2.) While increases on all scales were detected for parents with intervention compliance lower than 50%.

Difficult child → Parental distress → Parent-child dysfunction interaction → PSI-SF

CONCLUSIONS

- Recruitment and delivery of intervention were feasible.
- Abdominal massage has the potential to improve the postpartum parental stress level of Chinese parents in Hong Kong.
- The intervention will be modified by having a smaller intervention group each time because of the outbreak of COVID in Hong Kong.

Table 1. Characteristics (N=8)

Sex	
Male	2 (25%)
Female	6 (75%)
Age (range)	
25-34	6 (75%)
35-44	2 (25%)
Household income per month	
Below $19,999	2 (25%)
$ 20,000 - $39,999	2 (25%)
$ 40,000 - $59,999	3 (37.5%)
Above $ 60,000	1 (12.5%)
Marital status	
Married	8 (100%)
Educational level	
High school or below	1(12.5%)
Diploma or Degree	6 (75%)
Postgraduate degree or above	1 (12.5%)

Table 2.

Table 2.	Compliance (%)	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre-PSI-SF	>= 49	60.4	17.23
	< 49	63.7	23.18
Post PSI-SF	>=49	58	25.85
	< 49	92	50.09