

Summary

The research under Domestic Violence (DV) reveals a small number of studies about the impact of victimization of the mother on the relationship with her child. Focusing on this area of the DV, this research centers the attention on potential moderating elements of the mother-child relationship, Socioemotional Investment (SEI) and Maternal Involvement (MI). On this behalf, based on literature study, we analyzed the differential impact of DV in the mother-child relationship, concerning the DV, the severity of the aggression, concerning the child, the fact that violence is made directly and/or indirectly and the nature of the behavior issues of the child, and concerning the mother, her mental health.

We interviewed 52 women victim of DV, of which 18 were in institutional care for the female victim, unlike the other 32. For collecting the data we used the Questionário de Violência Doméstica (QVD) (Quintas, Serra, Oliveira, Alves & Pacheco, 2008) and the Escala de Investimento Parental na Criança (EIPC) (Bradley Whiteside-Mansell, & Brisby, 1997 – Versão S. Gameiro, M. Moura - Ramos, 1997).

The results showed negative effects of SEI, in particular the level of knowledge and sensitivity, as well as the MI. Also, the Knowledge and sensitivity appears to be lower with the high severity of physical violence. In sequence, the post-traumatic symptoms affect the Pleasure felt by the mother to be with the child, such as when the child is the direct victim of aggression. In both cases the interaction with the child is compromised in result of reduced leisure time spent with the child. The study also found that the externalizing behavior of the child contributes to a compromised Acceptance of parental role, as well as the Pleasure in being with the child. In fact, although not present a passive attitude, being a victim of DV affects their capability as mothers.

Considering the impact revealed at the SEI of the mother-victim, this study aims to contribute to the planning of interventions to support women victims at the level of parental guidance, minimizing the negative impact of DV in the mother-child and ultimately instance, the very adaptive development of the child.