

### **Prenatal co-parenting alliance in couples with spontaneous or medically assisted conception**

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Studies have shown that the quality of the prenatal coparenting alliance, in particular, the aspects of parental cooperation, warmth, and intuitive parenting behaviors are predictors of the family's postnatal interactive functioning at 3 (Carneiro et al., 2006), 9 and 18 months after birth (Favez, et al., 2006). These results suggest that the patterns of coparenting are established during pregnancy (Fivaz-Depeursinge, et al., 2010; Carneiro et al., 2006). In this perspective, the research have studied three different groups of first-time parents: a group of 90 Italian couples and a group of 49 Swiss couples who conceived spontaneously; a group of 33 Swiss couples who conceived through in vitro fertilization (IVF). The aims of the study are: a) to test the different characteristics and the quality of the prenatal coparenting alliance in the three groups; and b) to compare the marital satisfaction in the three groups. Method: the triadic interactions have been studied through the prenatal Lausanne Trilogue Play (prenatal LTP; Corboz-Warnery, Fivaz-Depeursinge, 2001) and the degree of Marital Adjustment have been investigated by the Dyadic Adjustment Scale questionnaire (DAS; Spanier, 1976) administered to mothers and fathers. Results: a) the ANOVA applied at the global score of LTP procedure does not highlight significant differences between the three studied samples ( $F(2,171) = .21, p = .810$  n.s.): this result show a general statistical homogeneity in the quality of the coparenting in pregnancy in these different populations of future parents; b) the ANOVA applied at the global score of DAS questionnaire highlights significant differences between the three studied samples ( $F(2,171) = 4.05, p = .019$ ): the mothers of the infertile group perceive their marital satisfaction as more satisfying than mothers in the Swiss control group.

### **Associations between Prenatal Alliance and Postnatal Observed Coparenting in Dual-Earner US Families**

Altenburger Lauren E.

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A high-quality coparenting relationship in which parents actively support and refrain from undermining each other's parenting has been shown to foster adaptive child and family functioning (McHale et al., 2002). The coparenting relationship develops across the transition to parenthood and shows stability from infancy forward (Schoppe-Sullivan, Mangelsdorf, Frosch, & McHale, 2004). As such, determining predictors of early coparenting is important so couples most at risk for coparenting difficulties can be identified (Feinberg, 2002). European studies using the Prenatal Lausanne Trilogue Play (LTP; Carneiro, Corboz-Warnery, & Fivaz-Depeursinge, 2006) suggest that the quality of interactions in the Prenatal LTP predicts postnatal family functioning (Carneiro et al., 2006; Favez, Frascarolo, & Fivaz-Depeursinge, 2006). The purpose of this study was to expand on this work to demonstrate the predictive validity of the Prenatal LTP to 9 months postpartum in a larger sample of dual-earner families from the US. 151 couples anticipating the birth of their first child participated in the prenatal LTP during the third trimester, which was coded for family warmth, cooperation, playfulness, structure, and mother/father intuitive parenting. At 9 months postpartum, observations of coparenting behavior (pleasure, warmth, coldness, displeasure, cooperation, and competition; Cowan & Cowan, 1996) were obtained from mother-father-infant interaction episodes in which parents were instructed to introduce a new toy to their infant. Preliminary correlation analyses indicate significant continuity between parents' prenatal LTP behavior and their observed coparenting one year later. In particular, when couples showed greater cooperation and playfulness in the prenatal LTP, they showed significantly greater coparental cooperation and warmth at 9 months postpartum. Moreover, greater prenatal playfulness was significantly correlated with less competition and coldness, and more pleasure postpartum. Additional analyses will use structural equation modeling to test whether these associations are mediated by earlier coparenting interactions at 3 months postpartum.

### **Early co parental dynamics during the transition to parenthood in multicultural parents**

Suardi Francesca

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A large amount of studies have investigated the transition to parenthood. The development of a coparental relationship, defined as the relationship between partners as parents, has been described as a major step of this transition. The coparental relationship already develops during pregnancy and research results indicate a continuity of the coparental relationship from the prenatal to the postnatal period. Studies have also shown that the quality of coparenting is one of the most significant variable which later affects the child's socio-emotional functioning.

Despite the empirical data available on the transition to parenthood, no previous study explored how multicultural parents experience the transition to parenthood and co-construct their coparental relationship. The current study focused on how partners' cultural differences influence their transition to parenthood. A sample of 30 couples (monocultural or multicultural) expecting their first child participated in a longitudinal study. Two research sessions took place during the transition to parenthood: a prenatal session (during the third trimester of pregnancy) and a postnatal session (3 to 6 months after birth). The outcome measures were the following :

1. Couple coparental interactions (observed during the prenatal and the postnatal LTP) ;
2. Quality of marital and coparental communication (observed during a laboratory discussion task) ;
3. Self-report measures about parenting and coparenting.

The results of 30 couples will be presented. The discussion will focus on family and child identity in multicultural families.

### **Transition to parenthood in lesbian parents families. A case study**

Miscioscia Marina

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The present work shows a frame about a particular period in the family life cycle called "transition to parenthood". Focus of this presentation is

the development of family interactive competences, from pregnancy to child born. In particular we observe the couple's capacity to organize triadic interactive models during pregnancy and to reorganize these models following the child's birth. These aspects have been widely explored in the context of heterosexual parents families (Fivaz et al., 2001, Favez et al., 2010) but very few of them have been written concerning homosexual parents families (D'Amore et al., 2010). Most of previous studies aimed to compare the child development in these two types of families, focusing on different dimensions such as the quality of parent-child relationship, the psychosocial development, or the gender identity (Vecho & Schneider, 2005). This presentation presents the situation of a family from our current longitudinal study in the Systemic and Relational Psychopathology Clinic, University of Liège. It describes three stages of the Lausanne Triadic Play: a prenatal situation taking place on the 7th month of pregnancy, and two postnatal situations when the child is 3 and 9 months old. We observe the particular interests of the LTP prenatal procedure as a predictive instrument of the parental abilities to enact their interactive competences after the child's birth, as verified with the postnatal procedure.

## WORKSHOP

### WK7 : CONTRIBUTION OF THE PIC-NIC GAME SITUATION IN THE EVALUATION OF DIVERSE FORMS OF FAMILIES

09:00-10:30 | Room 210 Amphipôle

*Chair:* France Frascarolo  
*Centre d'Etude de la Famille Lausanne (UR-CEF) (Switzerland)*

*Discussant:* Regina Kuersten-Hogan  
*Assumption College, Worcester (United States of America)*

The quality of family interactions is critical for child development. After the researches on parent-child dyads and father-mother-child triads, being able to assess interaction of families with more than one child is the following necessary step. Despite the importance of the sibling relationship (Brody, 1998) and family level interactions (Favez et al., 2012), family interactions with two parents and several children are still less studied because of the complexity of these interactions and because of the lack of adequate situations. The family play called the Pic-Nic Game has been created to fill this gap. This situation can be used with families whatever children, aged from few weeks till about 12 years, they count. In this situation, the family pretend play having a picnic, which allows observation of family interactions as well as a co-parenting, parenting and sibling relationships, in a game rather close to daily life activities (e.g. sharing a meal, tidying up). All the presentations of this symposium will show the richness of the observation it permits, with different types of families. The first presentation, concerning families with babies, will be held on the links between parental representations about their co-parenting and family interactions at 3 and 9 months after birth (Frascarolo et al.). In the second presentation, co-parenting in stepfamilies and in first-marriage families will be compared (Favez et al.). Finally, in the third presentation, qualitative analysis of divorced families' interaction will bring to the fore specificities of this type of families and incite to question the standards of intact families applied to divorced families (Bullens).

#### **Links between parental representation about their co-parenting and family interactions in the Pic-Nic Game at 3 and 9 months after birth**

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The quality of family interactions is well known as being important for the child development. Less known is the link between, on the one hand, observable interaction and, on the other hand, personal representations and feelings of the parents concerning their own coparental alliance. We have studied the link between these two aspects of family functioning during the first year after birth.

68 volunteer families, from middle to high socio-cultural levels participated to this study. When babies were respectively 3 and 9 month old, parents filled in the Parenting Alliance Inventory (Abidin & Brunner, 1995) and families were recorded during the Pic-Nic Game (a pretend play of having a family pique-nique, Frascarolo & Favez, 2005).

Preliminary results indicate that there are links between aspects of family interaction and maternal but not paternal representations of their coparenting. In particular mothers' perception of their partners' judgments concerning their maternal qualities seems important.

These results will be discussed in the light of a gender perspective of parental roles and investment in the family life.

#### **Coparenting in stepfamilies and in first-marriage families: Preliminary results from the observation of interactive processes during the Picnic Game**

Favez Nicolas

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Coparenting quality is critical for child and family functioning. To date, researches have been focused mainly on first-marriage families; coparenting is however a crucial issue in other forms of families, in particular in stepfamilies in which several adult dyads may be directly involved with the child. The multiplication of dyads can potentially multiply conflicts and disagreements between adults and increase the risk for the child. It is of utmost importance to better know the impact of the stepparent(s) coparental relationship with the parent(s) on the development of the child. This paper aims at presenting the first result of a comparison between mother-reported coparenting (covert) and observed coparenting (overt) in a standardized situation (the PicNic Game) in families with children between 6 and 12 years old (N=80 volunteer families; 48 stepfamilies and 32 first-marriage). Mothers completed several questionnaires aiming at assessing several psychological