

Effects of a military parenting program: Inhibitory control as a moderator

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Introduction

After Deployment, Adaptive Parenting Tools (ADAPT)

- Large numbers of National Guard and Reserve (NG/R) personnel were deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan. Service members' deployments place great demands on their families (Cozza, Chun, & Polo, 2005).
- ADAPT is a parent training program tailored to the specific needs of military families whose goal is to enhance effective parenting practices, thus reducing children's adjustment problems (Gewirtz, & Davis, 2014).
- This group-based preventive intervention is designed to target six core parenting practices: positive involvement, skill encouragement, problem solving, monitoring, discipline, and emotion socialization (Gewirtz, Pinna, Hanson, & Dustin, 2014).



Inhibitory Control and Parenting

- Inhibitory control (IC), which is the cognitive process of restraining or shifting automatic responses to maintain goal-directed behaviors (Aupperle et al., 2012), is associated with inconsistent discipline, low involvement and low level of supportive responses to children's negative emotions.
- Family relationships, especially parenting, may be compromised for individuals suffering from combat-related posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and associated problems, due to difficulties in emotion regulation.
- Decreased inhibitory function is related to PTSD symptom severity (Falconer et al., 2008), and the ability to disengage from even highly-valued stimuli could serve as a protective factor for preventing the development and maintenance of PTSD.

The Present Study

- The current study aims to investigate the effectiveness of ADAPT on improving parenting practices 12-month post-baseline, as well as the role of IC as a moderator.

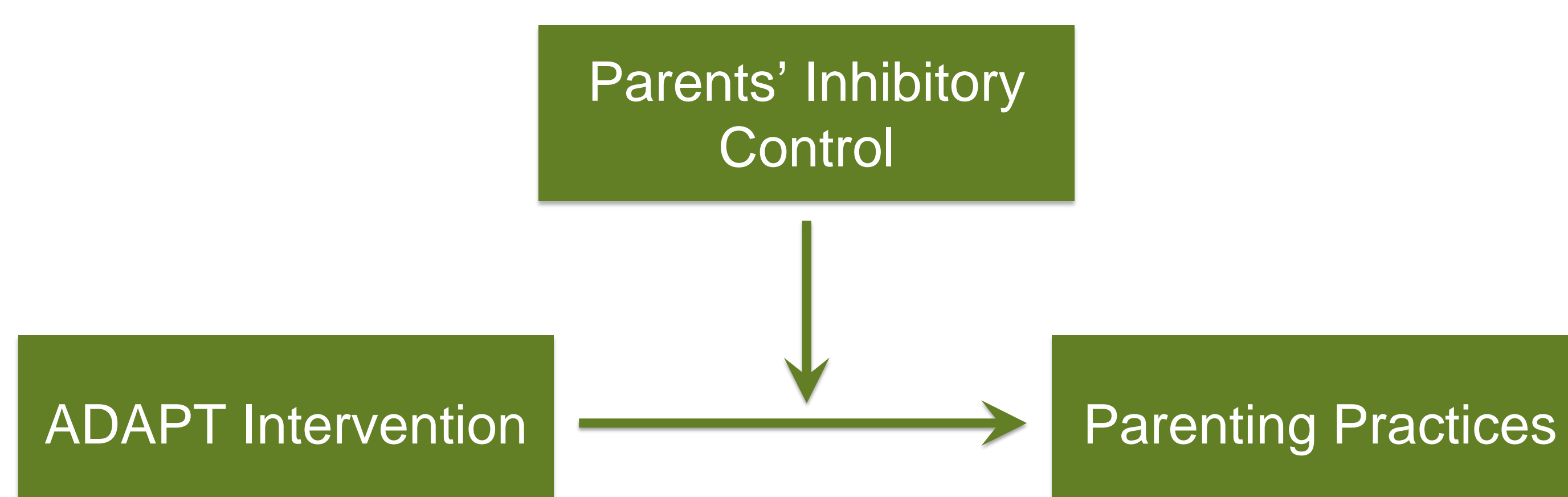


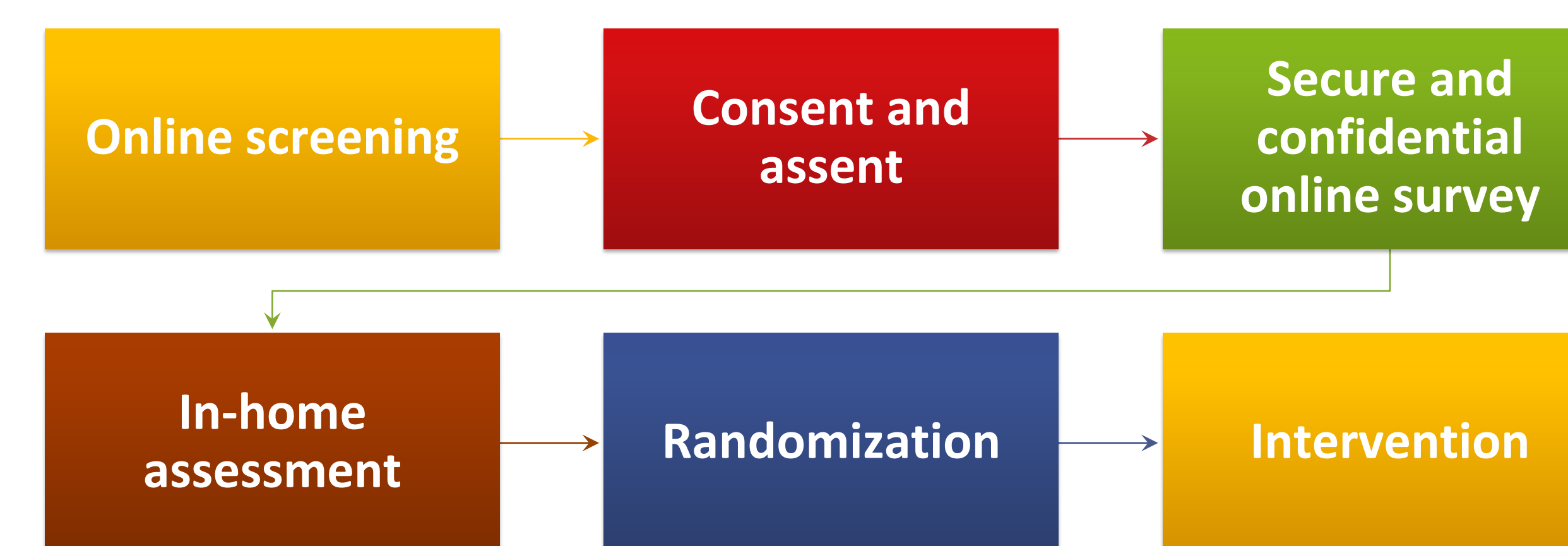
Fig 1. Proposed hypothetical moderation model for the relations between ADAPT intervention and parenting practices

Methods

Participants

- The current sample comprised 336 families with at least one deployed parent and one target child aged 5-12 enrolled in a randomized controlled trial of ADAPT. The majority of families were White (89%) and 281 were currently married (84.6%).

Procedure



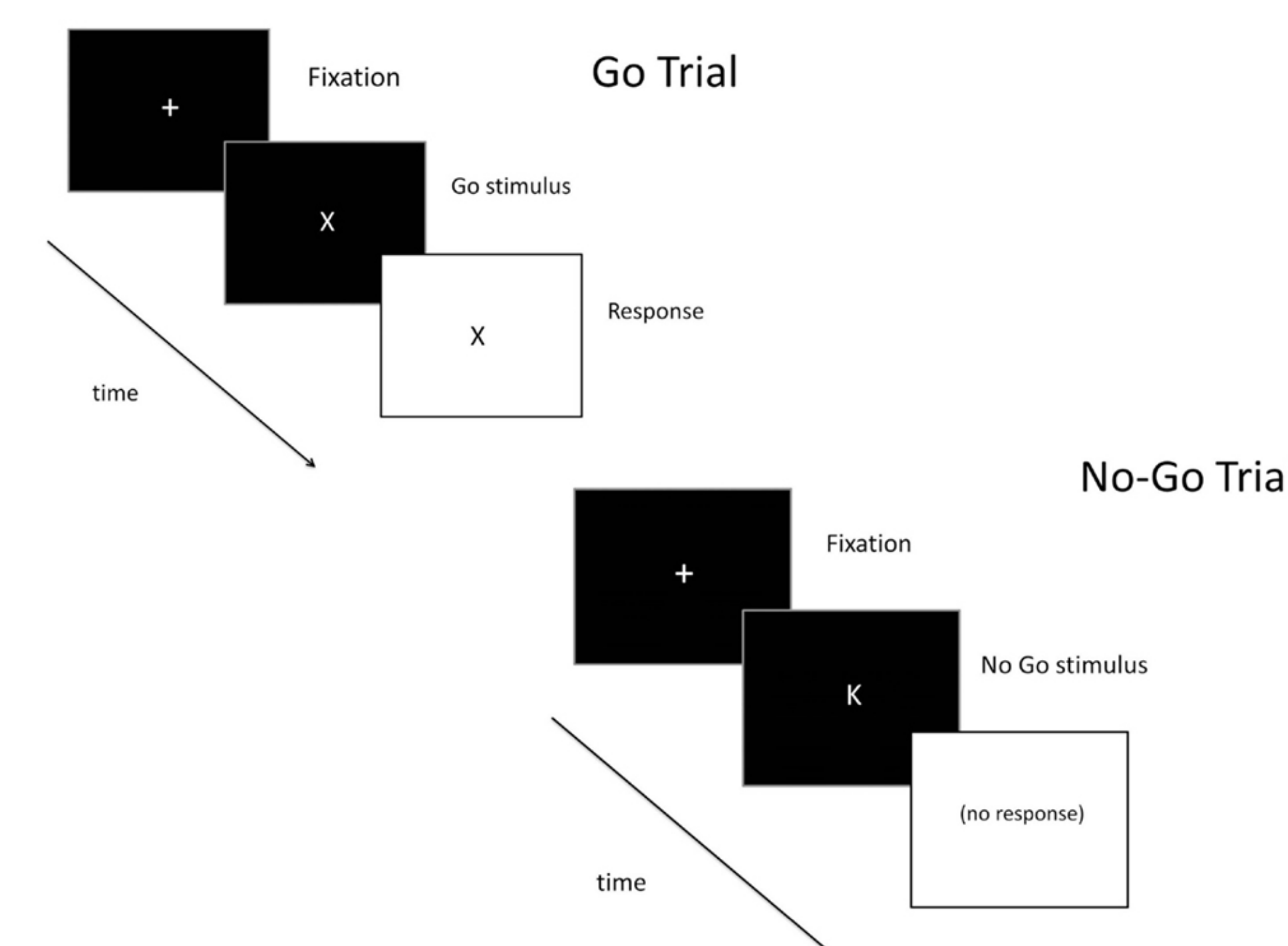
Measures

Parenting Practices

- Alabama Parenting Questionnaire-9 (APQ-9; Elgar, Waschbusch, Dadds, & Sigvaldason, 2007)
- Three domains of parenting practices: positive parenting, inconsistent discipline and poor supervision

Inhibitory Control

- Go-NoGo task
- Participants were presented with series of stimulus letters and they were instructed to press a button each time a letter flashed on the screen (the "go" condition), with an exception for the letter "X", where they were asked to refrain from pressing the button (the "nogo" condition).
- Scores were based on the number of commission errors, where the participant hit the button when required to withhold the response.



Data Analysis Plan

- An intent-to-treat (ITT) approach was used to evaluate intervention effects
- Missing data in all models were managed with the full information maximum likelihood (FIML) procedure used by Mplus version 7.

Results

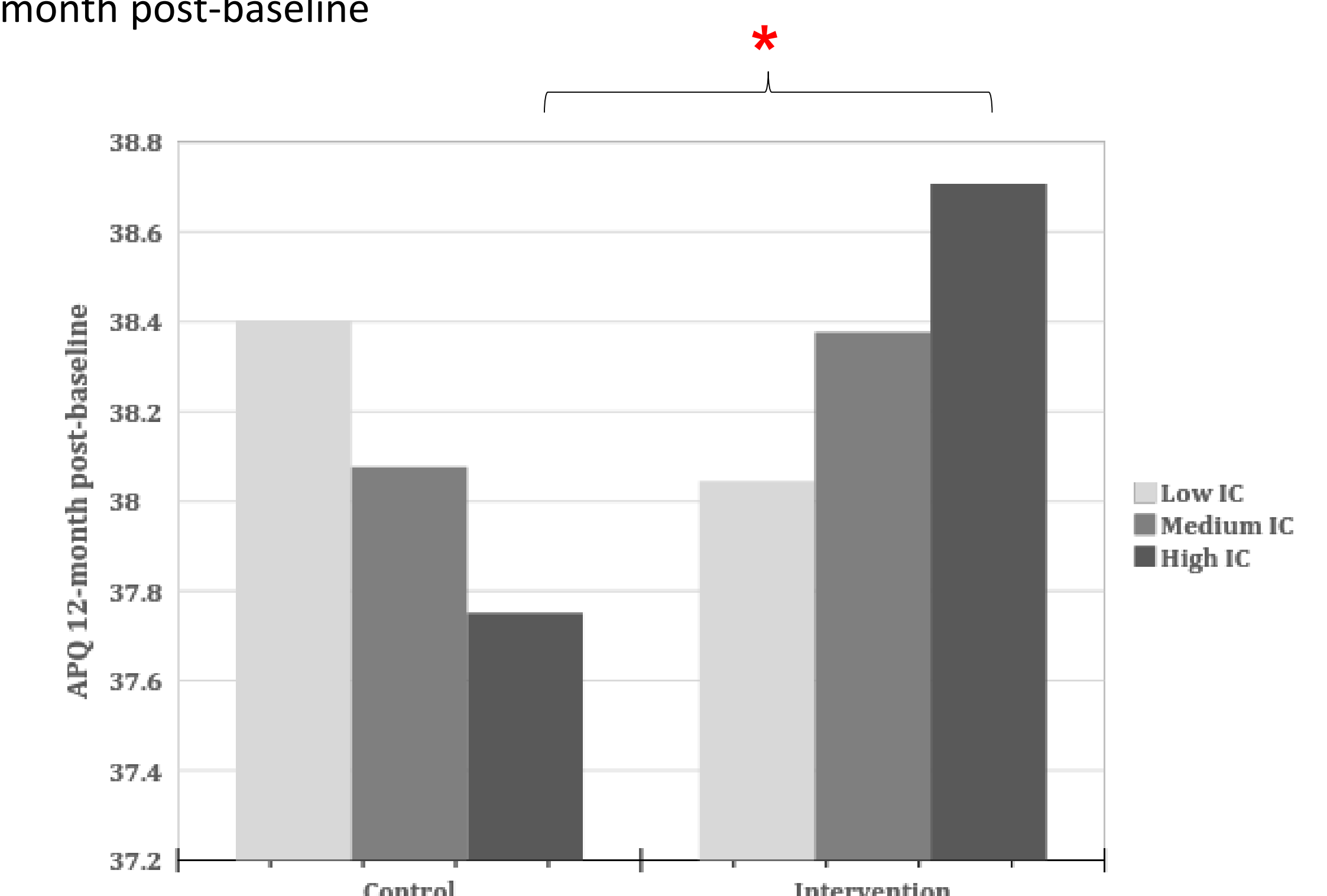
Table 1. Results of linear regression analysis predicting APQ 12-month post-baseline

Predictors	B	SE(B)	β	p	ΔR^2
Intercept	14.4	2.3	3.82	0.00	
Parent Gender	0.58	0.3	0.08	0.06	
Parent Age	0.03	0.03	0.05	0.38	
Education	0.07	0.12	0.02	0.55	
Year of Marriage	-0.08	0.04	-0.12	0.03	
Child Age	-0.02	0.07	-0.01	0.77	
Child Gender	0.38	0.3	0.05	0.21	
APQ Baseline	0.59	0.04	0.57	0.00	
IC	-0.05	0.04	-0.09	0.16	
Treatment	0.3	0.3	0.04	0.32	
ICxTreatment	0.11	0.05	0.13	0.03	.007*

IC: Inhibitory control; APQ: Alabama Parenting Questionnaire.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Fig 2. The moderation effect of parents' inhibitory control on the relationship between treatment and APQ 12-month post-baseline



Conclusions and Implications

- This study provided evidence for the effectiveness of ADAPT on improving parenting practices and the role of parents' inhibitory control as a moderator of the intervention among post-deployed families. Parents might possess higher preexisting levels of executive skills that, when accompanied by intervention, facilitate the enhancement of parenting to greater extent than for parents with executive deficits.

Reference

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