



FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF HUMAN SCIENCES

# Maternal Depression, Maltreatment History & Child Outcomes: The Role of Harsh Parenting

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# Current Knowledge

## Maternal Depression, Maltreatment History and Child Outcomes

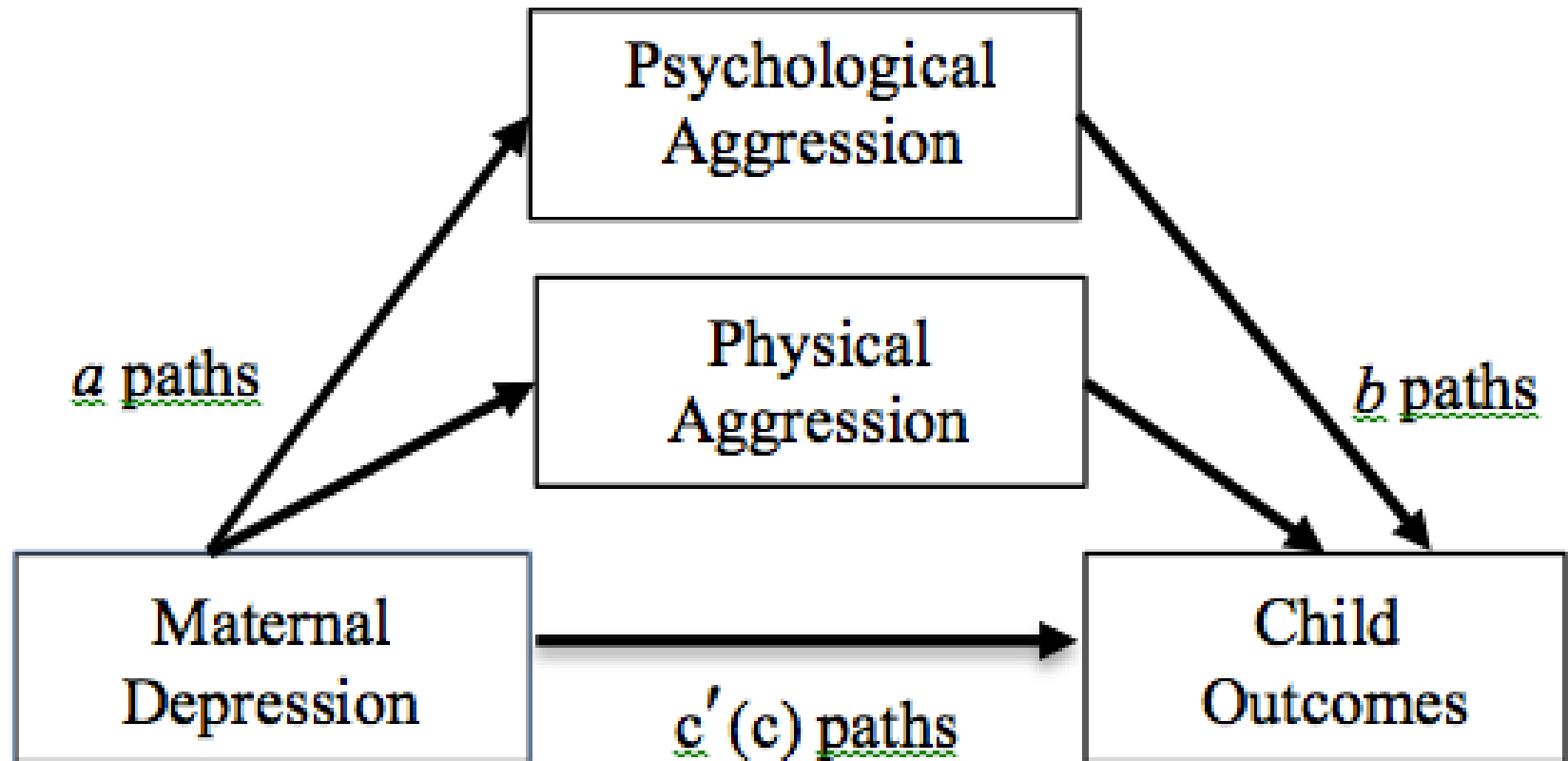
- Well-established link between maternal depression and child outcomes (Brennan et al., 2002; Burke, 2003)
- Risk for depression is higher for mothers with a history of child maltreatment (Spatz-Widom et al., 2007)
- The Challenge:
  - Several studies examine these variables separately
  - Understanding pathways through which these relationships occur

## The Role of Harsh Parenting

- Harsh parenting vs. abusive practices
- Psychological and Physical Aggression
- Theory:
  - Social Interaction Learning (SIL) Framework (Patterson et al., 2010)
  - Intergenerational Transmissions
- Relationship between Harsh Parenting and Maternal Depression

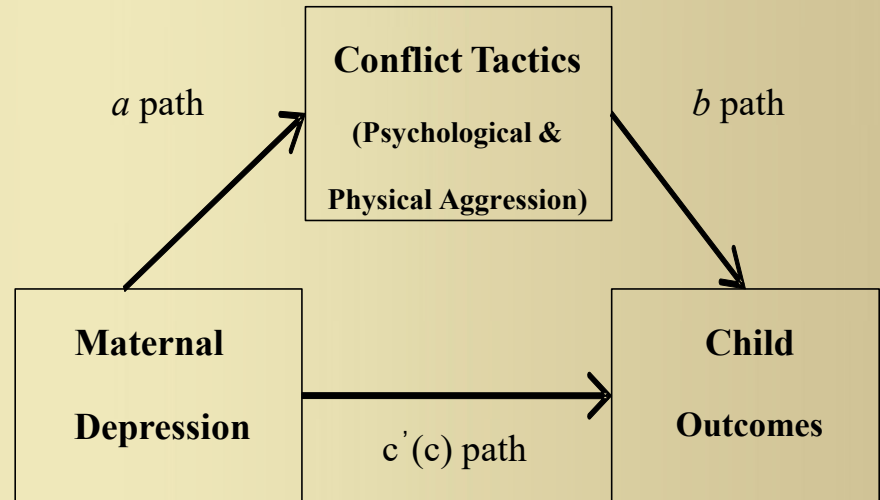


# *Figure 1: Proposed Mediation Models*



## Purpose of Current Study

- (1) Secondary Analysis:  
Longitudinal Studies of Child Abuse and Neglect (LONGSCAN)
- (2) Intentional selection of a subsample of mothers with reported depressive symptoms *and* child maltreatment history
- (3) Test the known associations between maternal depression and child outcomes through the mediation of harsh parenting for children age 6 and youth age 12



# Hypotheses

- Higher levels of maternal depression would be related to higher levels of internalizing (**H1a**) and externalizing (**H1b**) symptoms of children age 6 and youth age 12
- We expected that harsh parenting practices, specifically psychological (**H2**) and physical aggression (**H3**) would mediate the positive relationships between maternal depression and youth internalizing (**H2a & H3a**) and externalizing (**H2b & H3b**) symptoms.



# Method

## Sample:

- Mediation analyses conducted with two samples of at-risk mother-child dyads at separate time-points: Child age 6 ( $n = 325$ ) and youth age 12 ( $n = 213$ ) using data from LONGSCAN
- Mothers: 28% Caucasian ( $n = 92$ ); 42% African American ( $n = 137$ ); 5% Hispanic ( $n = 16$ ); 25% Multiracial ( $n = 84$ ).

## Measures:

- Maternal Maltreatment— Caregiver History of Loss and Victimization (VICA)
- Maternal Depression—CES-D
- Harsh Parenting—CTS-PC
- Child Outcomes—CBCL (age 6)
- Youth Outcomes—YSR (age 12)

Multiple regression analyses conducted to test direct paths proposed in mediation model

- Nonviolent conflict tactics included for comparison



# Results

- (1) Positive, significant associations were found between maternal depressive symptoms and child internalizing and externalizing at age 6 and youth age 12
- (2) Significant, partial mediation established among maternal depression, child outcomes and harsh parenting for both ages
- (3) Non-significant findings for non-violent parenting practices (as expected)



# Discussion

- **Strengths/Limitations**

- Study represents a “*fine combing*” of variables selected for analysis
- Extends literature to include maternal maltreatment history *in the context* of maternal depressive symptoms
- Extension of children of older ages: child age 6 and youth age 12
- Diverse representation of an at-risk sample
- Limitations: CTS-PC requires clarity on harsh vs. abusive parenting practices; further representation of maternal depressive symptomatology beyond 7-day period (as measured in the CES-D)

- **Future Directions**

- Onset & Variation in Maternal Depression
- Type of Abuse History (Physical, Sexual, Psychological) on Maternal Depression





# Clinical Implications

## Clinical Assessment Process

- **Consider** maternal depressive symptoms as co-occurring in the development of negative child outcomes during the initial assessment process
- **Psychoeducation** on impact of maternal depression on parent functioning
- **Treat** parent and child mental health challenges simultaneously

## Parenting Interventions

- The Triple-P Positive Parenting Program (Timmer et al., 2011)
  - Reduction in Maternal Depressive Symptoms
- The Parent-Management Training—Oregon Model (PMTO) (Patterson et al., 2010)
  - Reduction in Maternal Depressive Symptoms
- The Incredible Years (IY)
  - Parents with maltreatment history had a greater capacity for parenting practice improvement than non-maltreated parents (Hurlburt et al., 2013)



# References

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