Different amounts of protest in 4-month-old infants of depressed vs. non-depressed mothers
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The aim of the present study was to measure amount of infant protest in infants of depressed vs. non-depressed mothers, using the urban Copenhagen area with PPD group (\(n = 17\)) and a non-PPD group \((n = 19\)). The results showed that the infant protest was significantly heightened in the infants of depressed mothers, with a mean of 42.7% compared to 23.4% in the non-depressed group. The study was conducted using infant-teacher interaction and the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Status (EPDS) to measure the depression status of the mothers. The infants in the present study are 16 weeks, while infants in the other study are younger (8-11 weeks, 13.6 weeks, and 14.8 weeks). The differences in age are relatively small, however, infant might experience many interactions on a daily basis, making the experience on which they base their behavior accumulate quickly.

Finally, the infants of depressed mothers might as a group show both a heightened and a lowered amount of protest. Adopting Beebe’s mid-range model for interpretation would indicate that the different depressed samples are facing different types of regulatory differences. A heightened amount of protest would indicate that the infant is preoccupied with the interactive regulation while a lowered amount would indicate that the infant has turned to self-regulation (Beebe, Rustin, Sorter, and Kniblauch 2005).

Conclusions

Protest is a lowered amount of protest in infants of depressed mothers, while previous studies have detected higher amounts. The relatively small sample size of the depressed group should be taken into account. However, findings of both a higher and a lower amount of protest in infants of depressed mothers might be explained by a model where a mid-range amount is seen as optimal. Operating outside the “mid-range” could be understood as attempts to cope with interactional disturbances by heightening or lowering the response.

References


