RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS FOR INFANTS BEDTIME RESISTANCE IN THE FIRST YEAR OF LIFE

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Infant’s difficult temperament and parental mental health could interfere with children’s sleep quality and regular bedtime routines (Sorondo et al., 2015; Teti & Crosby, 2012; Tikotzky, 2017). While mothers’ role in sleep difficulties have been widely described in literature, fathers’ contribution is not so often taken into account. The current study aimed to explore in a group of infants from 8 to 12 months old, the relationships among child negative emotionality, parental bedtime caregiving (methods of falling asleep and constant bedtime routines), parental post-partum affective disorders and children’s bedtime difficulties and to combine aforementioned variables into a predictive model of infants’ bedtime difficulties perceived by both parents.

56 Italian intact two-parent families participated (33 boys) in this study. Parents completed Brief Infant Sleep Questionnaire (Sadeh, 2009), Italian Temperament Questionnaires (Axia, 2002), Perinatal Assessment of Paternal and Maternal Affectivity (Baldoni et al., 2016), an ad-hoc scale for parental bedtime involvement.

The main results evidenced that bedtime caregiving, parents’ post-partum affective disorders and paternal involvement dimensions were significantly correlated with infants’ bedtime difficulties. The main results from the two hierarchical regression models performed to evaluate the predictive roles of studied variables on children’s bedtime difficulties showed respectively that method of falling asleep ($\beta= -.22, p < .05$), constant bedtime routines ($\beta= -.47, p < .001$) and father’s bedtime involvement ($\beta= -.25, p < .05$) were relevant predictors of children’s bedtime difficulties perceived by mothers and method of falling asleep ($\beta= -.27, p < .05$), paternal post-partum affective disorders ($\beta= .35, p < .05$) and fathers’ bedtime involvement ($\beta= -.40, p < .05$) were crucial predictors of children’s bedtime difficulties perceived by fathers.

Findings support that bedtime caregiving, parental post-partum affective disorders, and paternal role can play a meaningful role at bedtime.