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Brief Report: The Impact of Maternal Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Symptoms and Child Gender on Risk for Persistent Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Symptoms in Child Trauma Victims

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Abstract

Objective To longitudinally examine the impact of maternal posttraumatic stress disorder symptoms (PTSS) on child adjustment following a child's traumatic injury, focusing on child gender differences. **Methods** Forty-one child traumatic injury victims aged 8–18 years and their biological mothers were interviewed over two follow-ups (6 weeks and 7 months). Children were administered the Clinician-Administered Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Scale for Children and Adolescents (CAPS-CA), whereas mothers completed the CAPS. Results Six weeks post trauma, maternal PTSS were significantly related to PTSS in boys but not in girls. However, at 7 months, maternal PTSS were

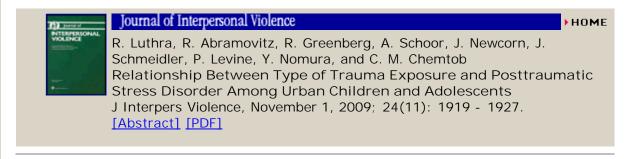
strongly related to child PTSS in both boys and girls. Significant 6-week maternal distress—child gender interactions suggested that maternal PTSS, especially avoidance, predicted greater 7-month PTSS but that this was primarily because of a significant relationship in females. **Conclusions** Maternal distress was found to negatively impact subsequent child adjustment, particularly in females. These results underscore the importance of considering family-centered interventions for child PTSD, especially in girls.

Key words: children; maternal posttraumatic stress symptoms; pediatric injury; posttraumatic stress disorder.

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