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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

Sarah A. Ostrowski, MA¹, Norman C. Christopher, MD^{2,3} and Douglas L. Delahanty, PhD^{1,4}

¹ Department of Psychology, Kent State University, ² Akron Children's Hospital, Emergency/Trauma Services, ³ Department of Emergency Medicine and Pediatrics, Northeastern Ohio Universities College of Medicine (NEOUCOM), and, ⁴ Department of Psychology in Psychiatry, Northeastern Ohio Universities College of Medicine (NEOUCOM)

All correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Douglas L. Delahanty, PhD, Department of Psychology, 118 Kent Hall, Kent State University, Kent, Ohio 44242. E-mail: ddehahan@kent.edu

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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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