Patterns of post traumatic stress in child-parent pairs after PICU treatment

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What is known
- Evidence for PTS in PICU parents
  (Balluffi et al 2004; Rees et al 2004; Colville & Gracey 2006)
- Evidence for PTS in PICU children;
  (Rennick et al 2002, 2004; Rees et al 2004)
- Evidence of interaction between parents and kids

What we need more info on
- Long term follow up of at risk populations
- Longitudinal course of PTS
  (Ehlers & Clark 2003 natural history)
- Interactions between child and parent PTS
- Child self report of PTS symptoms

Children’s Memories Project
Prospective cohort design:
- Interview at 3m; Telephone follow up at 1y
Measures:
- Parent : SPAN (4 items from Davidson Trauma Scale)
- Child : Child Revised Impact of Event Scale (8 item version)

Sample
- Survivors over 7 years of age (n=102)
  and parent (81 mothers; 18 fathers; 3 other)

PTS prevalence: Parents
Parent PTS

PTS prevalence: Children

Child PTS

Child avoidance and intrusion at 3 mths

Parent and Child Post Traumatic Stress

SPAN items at 3 months
Predictors* of Post traumatic stress: Parents

3 mths
- Emergency admission (p<0.001)

1 yr
- Emergency admission (p<0.001)
- PTS score at 3m (p<0.001)
- Anxiety score at 3m (p<0.001)
- Depression score at 3m (p<0.001)

* Spearman correlations

Predictors* of Post traumatic stress: Children

3 mths
- Emergency admission (p<0.01)
- Delusional memories inc hallucinations (p<0.05)

NB 1 in 3 children reported delusional memories

1 yr
- Post traumatic stress score at 3m (p<0.01)

* Spearman correlations

Child-parent Interactions

**Possible interactions:**
- Traumatised parent doesn’t attend to child’s needs as much as normal because of their own distress
- Parent avoids reminders and in doing so avoids exposing child
- Child avoids discussing trauma as this makes parent upset
- Child gets more upset

parent distress \[\rightarrow\] child distress

Or alternatively
- Child just not themselves - withdrawn, fearful, avoidant, refusing to talk about trauma
- Parent upset to see change in child and distressed at their own inability to lift child’s mood or help them come to terms with what has happened

child distress \[\rightarrow\] parent distress

Maybe both?
Spearman correlations for PTS scores (n=66)

3m parent span → 0.38** → 1y parent span
child ies → 0.44** → child ies

Spearman correlations for PTS scores (n=66)

3m parent span → 0.38** → 1y parent span
0.32** child ies → 0.44** child ies

Spearman correlations for PTS scores (n=66)

3m parent span → -0.02 → 1y parent span
child avoid → -0.08
child intrus

Spearman correlations for PTS scores (n=66)

3m parent span → 0.38** → 1y parent span
child avoid → 0.38** child intrus

Delayed PTS

Parents: new cases at 1 yr

![Graph showing new cases at 3 months and 1 year]
Sub group analyses

- New child cases (n=9)
  - More likely to have parent scoring above cut off at 1y (p<0.05)

- New parent cases (n=8)
  - Higher parental anxiety and PTS scores at 3m (p<0.01)
  - Higher child avoidance at 3m (p<0.05)

Main findings (1)

- Higher prevalence of PTS in parents (45%) than children (28%) at 3 mths
- Similar prevalence at 1y (29%, 26%)
- Nearly half of post traumatic stress cases at 1y are NEW cases (parents and children)

Main findings (2)

- New child cases more likely to have parent who is a case at 1y
- New and continuing parent cases more likely to have avoidant child at 3m
- Nearly half of pairs contain at least one member scoring above PTS cut-off at 1yr