

Infantile atopic dermatitis and mother-infant bonding: A mixed methods study



Research
Manitoba



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INTRODUCTION

Caring for a child with atopic dermatitis can impose a considerable burden on parents due to:

- The time consuming nature of treatments
- Impact on child sleep
- Worries about corticosteroids

This burden has been reflected in reduced quality of life and increased stress.

It is not clear whether parents of children with atopic dermatitis report a lower quality bond with their child.

AIM: Investigate the quality of the infant-mother bond among mothers with children with atopic dermatitis and those without

METHOD

Eligibility: Mothers of children under the age of 19 months with and without atopic dermatitis.

Participants recruited from social media and Winnipeg medical clinics.

METHOD

Measures: Demographic questionnaire, Postpartum Bonding Questionnaire

Quantitative analyses: Multiple regression analyses

Covariates: Mother's age, education, relationship status, child's age, family income, number of children

Qualitative data: a subset of ten mothers with children with atopic dermatitis completed a semi-structured interview on psychosocial the impact of the condition

Qualitative analysis: Thematic analysis

RESULTS

Cases = 32

Mean mother age = 30 years (± 4)



Mean child age = 8 months (± 4)



Controls = 64

Mean mother age = 31 years (± 4)



Mean child age = 7 months (± 4)

RESULTS

Participants were largely found to have healthy bonds as only 11 participants had one or more elevated scores on the four bonding scales.

Table 2. Multiple linear regression analyses predicting mother-infant bonding from AD status (cases vs controls)

	Coefficient (b)	95%CI	p-value
Impaired bonding			
Atopic dermatitis status	-0.57	-2.61; 1.47	0.58
Infant-directed anxiety			
Atopic dermatitis status	-1.06	-2.06; -0.06	0.04
Pathological anger			
Atopic dermatitis status	-0.96	-2.43; 0.50	0.20
Incipient abuse			
Atopic dermatitis status	-0.04	-0.13; 0.06	0.44

Results from the qualitative interviews suggest that the regular caregiving required to manage atopic dermatitis may actually strengthen the bond between some mothers and infants



Moms with a child with atopic dermatitis reported lower levels of infant-directed anxiety

"I am taking care of him more. It is a better relationship because I always have to look after him and I always have to think about him, in a good way. Yes, because I know that he needs me, he needs me to take care of him" – participant 3

CONCLUSION

Findings from the current study provide preliminary evidence that atopic dermatitis does not have a negative impact on the quality of the mother-infant bond. However, more research needed to confirm whether the findings can be replicated in larger and more diverse samples.