

Intergenerational transmission of maternal childhood trauma

prenatal and postnatal post-traumatic stress symptoms and infant negative affectivity

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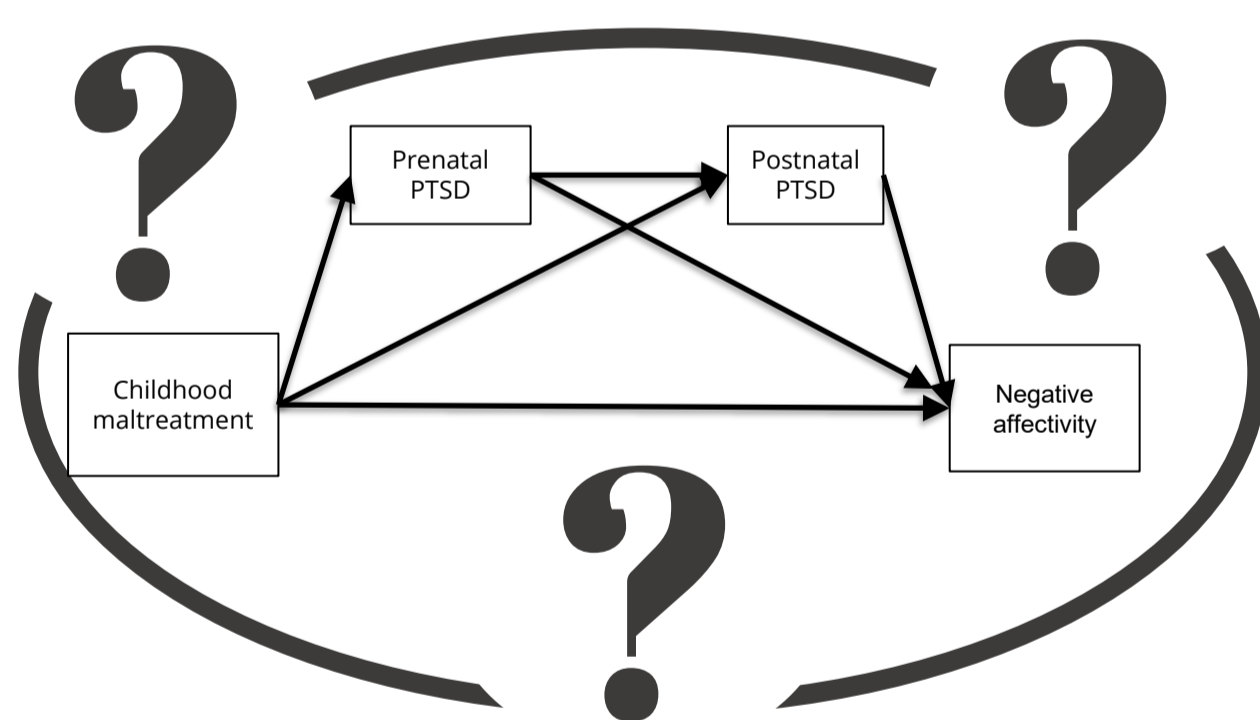
Introduction

Maternal childhood maltreatment has well-documented intergenerational repercussions and **is associated with higher levels of infant negative affectivity (NA)**, a temperamental trait predictive of subsequent developmental difficulties ^{2,3}.

However, the mechanisms underlying this association remain poorly understood. The present study examines, for the first time, whether prenatal and postnatal maternal **post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms** account for the previously observed association between **maternal childhood maltreatment** and **infant negative affectivity**.

Aim of the study

Examine the direct and indirect associations between maternal childhood maltreatment and infant negative affectivity, considering the mediating role of prenatal and postnatal maternal PTSD symptoms.



Sample characteristics



Age (mean)
≈ 29.68 years



Education
7.6% High school
23.8% College (CEGEP)
47.1% University

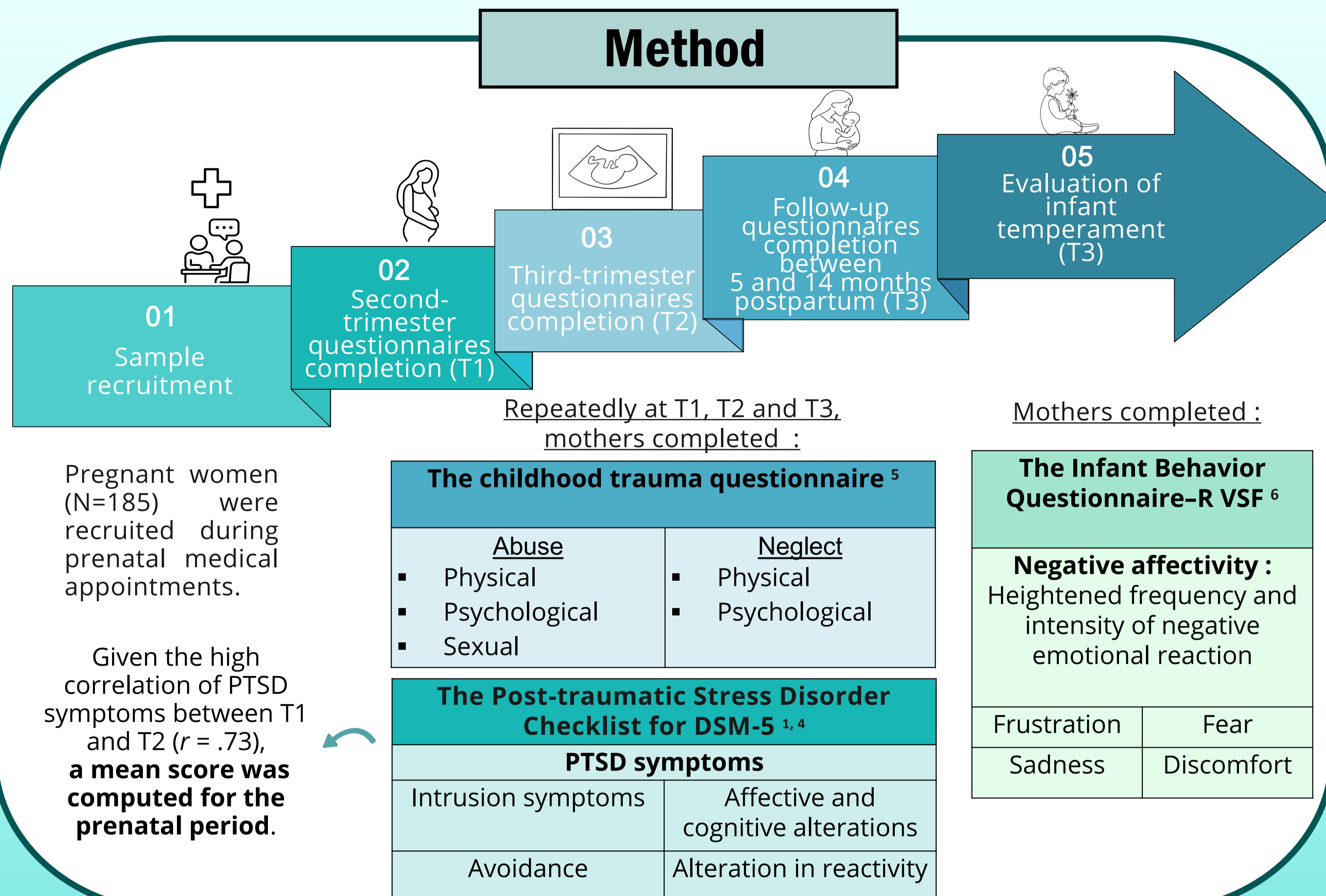


Annual income
9.7% < 35 000
54.1% 35 000-100 000
35.1% >100 000

References



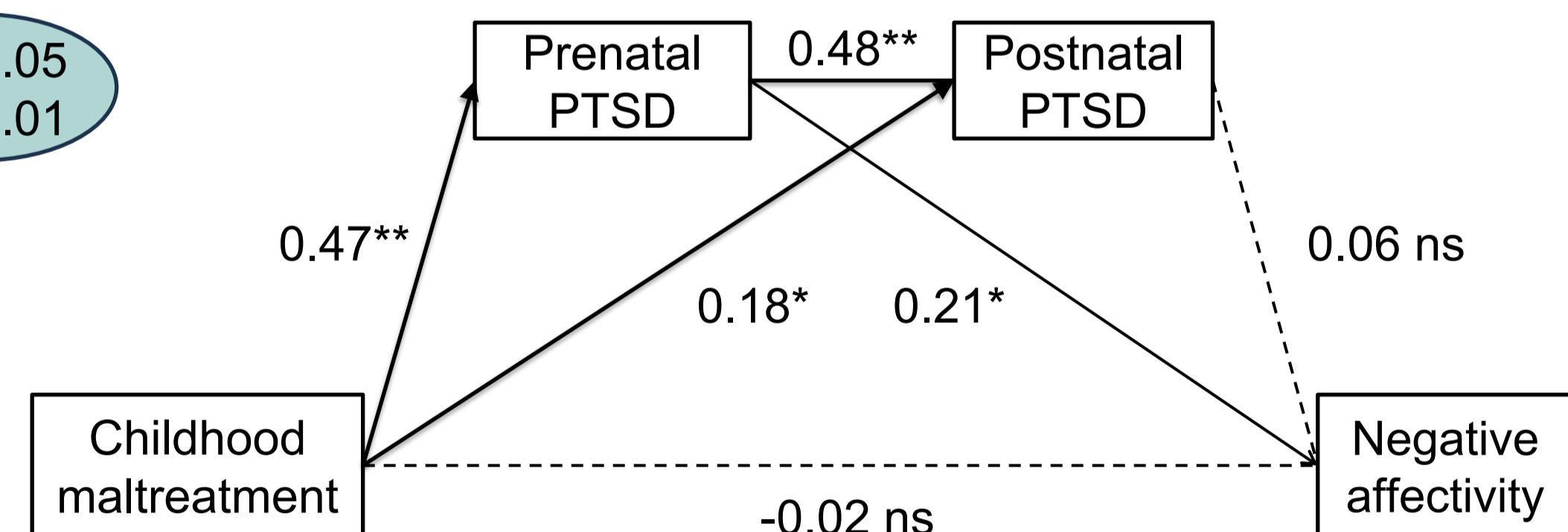
Method



Results

Path analyses revealed, as hypothesized, a **significant** indirect association between maternal childhood maltreatment and infant negative affectivity through **prenatal PTSD symptoms** ($\beta = .09, p = .046$), but no contribution of postnatal PTSD symptoms to infant negative affectivity. Specifically, higher levels of maternal childhood maltreatment were associated with greater prenatal PTSD symptomatology, which in turn predicted higher levels of infant negative affectivity.

* $p < .05$
** $p < .01$



Conclusion

- These findings underscore the prenatal period as a **critical window for the intergenerational transmission of childhood maltreatment**.
- This project highlights the need for future research to determine whether intergenerational risk trajectories can be **mitigated through prenatal interventions targeting PTSD symptoms in trauma-exposed pregnant women**.

Limits :

- The results demonstrate **significant associations** but does not establish **directional effects**.
- Prenatal PTSD symptoms were associated with **5% of the variance in infant NA**, suggesting that **other factors are also linked to infant temperament**.