

Attachment and coparenting mental representations in fathers during the transition to parenthood

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Objectives/Background. Attachment theory is a useful framework to explore coparenting mental representations, an important developmental task within the transition to parenthood. This study aimed to analyze the association between fathers' attachment orientations (avoidance and anxiety) and fathers' mental representations of coparenting, from the first trimester of pregnancy to six months postpartum¹. **Methods.** Eighty-six fathers recruited at the first trimester of pregnancy completed self-report measures of attachment and coparenting mental representations² at the first and third trimester of pregnancy, and at one and six months postpartum. Growth curve models were performed. **Results.** From the first trimester of pregnancy to six months postpartum, higher attachment avoidance was associated with (1) a higher decrease on perceived coparenting support; (2) an increase on perceived coparenting conflict (while low attachment avoidance was associated with a decrease); and (3) a lower decrease on perceived coparenting disagreement. From the first trimester of pregnancy to six months postpartum, higher attachment anxiety was associated with a higher decrease on perceived coparenting support. **Conclusion/Discussion.** This study highlights how adult's attachment orientations interfere in the way fathers develop their coparenting mental representations, an important developmental task and a dimension of psychological adjustment within the transition to parenthood.

Keywords: attachment; coparenting mental representations; fathers.

References

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