



SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY

DOCTORATE IN CLINICAL AND COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY

MAJOR RESEARCH PROJECT

**Infant Temperament, Maternal Attributions, Mood and Rumination,
in Predicting Maternal Problem-solving and Mother-Infant Bonding
in the Postnatal Period**

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Abstract

Background: The present study considers some of the underlying mechanisms that may be acting in postnatal depression (PND). It has been suggested that rumination predicts problem solving ability and that child temperament and maternal attributions predict mother-infant bonding. This study aims to investigate the role that brooding and reflective rumination may play in predicting and mediating these relationships in postnatal women.

Methods: Postnatal women were recruited to complete an online survey. 190 women responded and completed the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS), Maternal Attribution Scale (MAS), Postpartum Bonding Questionnaire (PBQ), Parental Problem Solving Task (PPST), Rumination Response Scale (RRS), Infant Behaviour Questionnaire (IBQ) and a confidence in problem solving using a Visual Analogue Scale (VAS).

Results: Analyses showed that reflective rumination mediated the relationship between low infant soothability and high negative attributions, on maternal problem solving. Reflective and Brooding Rumination also predicted confidence in problem solving and mother-infant bonding. Analyses showed that infant temperament (soothability and distress) and maternal attributions (positive and negative) predicted confidence in problem solving and mother-infant bonding

Limitations: This study employed a correlational design and therefore all inferences regarding possible causal pathways are tentative. Limitations include the use of self report measures to assess mother-infant bonding and infant temperament.

Additionally the PPST is a new measure which needs further validation.

Conclusions: Reflective rumination may act as an adaptive strategy for women in the postnatal period when faced with difficult child temperaments, and for those employing negative attributions, when faced with parent specific problem solving tasks. In addition, Brooding and Reflective Rumination may be important in predicting difficulties in mother-infant bonding. Difficult Infant temperaments and less positive or more negative maternal attributions, may affect problem solving, confidence in problem solving and mother-infant bonding in the postnatal period. Future research should look to replicate these findings and explicate possible causal relationships within a postnatal population.

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