

94

06436

U·M·I

**MICROFILMED 1994**

## **INFORMATION TO USERS**

**This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.**

**The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.**

**In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.**

**Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.**

**Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.**

# **U·M·I**

University Microfilms International  
A Bell & Howell Information Company  
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA  
313/761-4700 800/521-0600

PREVIEW

**Order Number 9406436**

**Children of substance abusers: Observations and their mothers'  
reports of childrearing practices**

**Padilla-Rafalsky, Sarai Ramona, Psy.D.**

**Pace University, 1993**

PREVIEW

**U·M·I**

**300 N. Zeeb Rd.  
Ann Arbor, MI 48106**

PREVIEW

**CHILDREN OF SUBSTANCE ABUSERS:  
OBSERVATIONS AND THEIR MOTHERS' REPORTS OF  
CHILDREARING PRACTICES**

**by**

**Sarai Padilla-Rafalsky**

**A Doctoral Project Submitted in Partial fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Psychology in the  
Department of Psychology at Pace University**

**NEW YORK**

**1993**

PREVIEW

PREVIEW

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge with the deepest appreciation the women who participated in my study. Their enthusiasm, candor, and desire to help me were true gifts.

To Dr. Chisholm and Dr. Ward, my doctoral project advisor and consultant, how can I ever repay you for the hours, scholarship, and life you brought to my project? You never wavered in your commitment throughout this project. You believed in my ideas and you believed in me. Your encouragement, advice, and warmth made this arduous process attainable and gratifying. Thank you for working with me on a task that marks the culmination of the beginning of my professional life as a psychologist.

To Dr. Fahs, the Director of the Infant School, your expertise and professionalism are worthy of the highest accolades. You are a role model and your exuberance and dedication to working with infants and their mothers who are substance abusers is a high calling. Thank you.

To Dr. Brotman, the Chief Executive Officer at the Center for Comprehensive Health Practice, Inc., for your realism, sense of humor, and intellectual insight, thank you. Our conversations were highlights in my work and made the



road I had to travel to complete this journey very clear to me. Thank you.

To Fred Suffet, Director of Evaluation Research, for his technical assistance, Abby Asrat, the Director of the Toddler School, for assistance with the Toddler School participants, Dr. Marian Margulies for her encouragement and discussions of the child data, and all the staff at the Infant and Toddler schools, thank you. For close to a year, I worked in your midst and I felt welcome.

To my mother, Rosaura, who was always there for me with her gentle and loving spirit and did everything humanly possible to insure my personal and spiritual growth and excellence in education. Thank you. Her memory lives in the lives of all she touched and in this labor of love.

To my daughter, Kassandra, whose maturity and support have been immeasurable in a task that seemed never ending. Thank you for the sacrifices of time that obtaining this degree placed on our relationship.

To my husband, Tom, thank you for the hours I had to spend away from you. Thank you for always believing I could do it even when I wasn't so sure. Your support and work with substance abusers were invaluable contributions to the completion of this project.

To my dad, Joseph, who shared the value of education with me at an early age and gained so much pleasure from

each of my accomplishments, thank you. To my stepmother, Elena, for her sense of humor when life seemed humorless. Thank you.

To my friends, Naida, Ralph, Gabriel, Jasmine, Arthur, Vicky, and so many others who accepted why I couldn't "come out and play". And to my dear friend, Ronna, who knows firsthand the agony and ecstasy of being a doctoral candidate. Thank you.

And to the countless people, family members, professors, supervisors, colleagues, peers, and patients that through their teachings and lives inspired me and motivated me, thank you.

Finally, I would like to thank God for giving me the strength and ability to reach this pinnacle of achievement. It is my sincere hope that I can give as I have received.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
Acknowledgments.....	iii
List of Tables.....	ix
Abstract.....	x
I. Introduction.....	1
II. Review of the Literature.....	4
Addicted Mothers - An Overview	
Extent of the Problem	
The State of Affairs for Addicted Mothers: Poor Health and Depression	
Parenting and Substance Abuse	
Children of Substance Abusers - An Overview	
In Utero Exposure to Drugs	
Postnatal Outcomes	
Follow-up Studies	
Intelligence and Play	
Statement of Purpose	
Research Questions	
III. Methodology.....	48
Participants	
Demographic Sheet and Instruments	

Chapter	Page
Demographic Sheet	
Child-rearing Practices Report (CRPR), modified version	
Bayley Scales of Infant Development	
The Checklist for Caregiver-Infant Observation	
Home Observation for Measurement of the Environment - Short Form (HOME-SF)	
Procedure	
The Agency	
Administration	
IV. Results.....	63
Description of Sample	
Research Questions	
Research Question 1	
Research Question 2	
Research Question 3	
Research Question 4	
Research Question 5	
Research Question 6	
Additional Analyses	
V. Discussion.....	83
Maternal Drug Usage	
Demographics	
Parental Attitudes	
Parental Styles	

Chapter	Page
Parent-Child Interactions	
Summary of Findings	
Limitations of Study	
Relevance to School Psychology Applications	
Implications for Future Research	
References.....	109
Appendices.....	117
A. Cover Letter to Agency	
B. Proposal to Agency	
C. Presentation of Study to Mother	
D. Consent	
E. Demographic Sheet	
F. The Child-Rearing Practices Report, modified version	
G. Bayley Scales of Infant Development	
H. Home Observation for Measurement of the Environment - Short Form (HOME-SF)	
I. Checklist for Caregiver-Infant Observation	

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1 Demographics on Sample.....	64
2 Correlations between Parental Attitudes and Parent-Child Interaction Variables.....	67
3 Maternal Drug Usage.....	69
4 Means, Standard Deviations, and t-tests for Parental Attitudes Variables as a Function of Maternal Drug Usage.....	72
5 Means, Standard Deviations, and t-tests for Parent-Child Variables as a Function of Maternal Drug Usage.....	73
6 Means, Standard Deviations, and t-tests for Parent-Child Variables as a Function of Parental Style.....	75
7 Correlations between Parental Attitudes and Demographic Variables.....	77
8 Correlations between Parent-Child Variables and Demographics.....	80
9 Correlations among Parental Attitude Variables...	81
10 Correlations among Parent-Child Interaction Variables.....	82

## ABSTRACT

The widespread use of drugs includes women who are mothers and of childbearing age. As a result, their children are exposed to drugs in utero and raised in an environment by a parent who has an addictive lifestyle. A review of the literature shows that women who are substance abusers suffer from depression, low self-esteem, have poor health and nutrition, and histories of family violence and abuse.

In addition to the drug use, addictive women during pregnancy often lack prenatal care. In utero exposure to drugs is associated with multiple postnatal outcomes which include prematurity, low birth weight, neonatal abstinence syndrome, and Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS). Intelligence testing found that the children scored within the normal range but significantly lower than the children of drug-free controls.

Conflicting views on the parenting of mothers who are substance abusers exist. Deprived and poorly nurtured in childhood themselves, they feel inadequate as parents. However, they love their children, are capable of learning

developmental issues of childhood, and can respond with sensitivity to their needs.

The purpose of this study was to examine the child-rearing attitudes and parental style of addicted mothers and the impact of their drug use, parental attitudes, and demographic variables on their interactions with their children.

Forty-four mothers, forty-one drug users and three non-drug users, and nineteen infants participated in the study. Participants attended the Infant and Toddler Schools of the Center for Comprehensive Health Practice, Inc. During a preliminary briefing participants were advised of their rights and the nature of the study. Once informed, written consent was obtained, subjects completed the demographic sheet and the modified Child-Rearing Practices Report (CRPR). The child data was obtained from the agency and included the scores of the Bayley Scales of Infant Development, the Checklist for Caregiver-Infant Observation, and the Home Observation for Measurement of the Environment-Short Form (Home-SF). Data analyses were conducted via the use of correlations, T-tests, means, standard deviations, frequencies, and z scores.

Generally, greater parental control and less expression of affection were adhered to as values by the participants of the study. Correlations as a function of drug usage and demographic variables suggested that the participants held



both sound and inappropriate child-rearing attitudes. Length of treatment and the age of the youngest child emerged as the demographic variables most related to the parental attitude variables. The children scored within the average range of intelligence, however, the range of variation was highly significant.

PREVIEW

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The use of drugs has become increasingly widespread. More and more, women of childbearing age have become drug-dependent. In school-community psychology, an understanding of the children and the families we service is essential to the success of our work. In order to understand the effects of in utero exposure to drugs, a review of the literature was undertaken. The literature showed that there are multiple postnatal outcomes to drug-exposed children. The effects of these postnatal outcomes to children's intelligence and behavior can be short or long-term. On the other hand, postnatal effects are not experienced by all children exposed to drugs in utero.

When treating children, unlike adults, work with their parents and family is often necessary. In order to treat children of substance abusers, the addictive parent must be understood. This research study focused on women who are substance abusers and their children. The literature reveals that women who are substance abusers were deprived of nurturance in childhood (Colten, 1979) and raised in homes where violence and abuse occurred (Cuskey, 1982). As women, they are depressed, have very low self-esteem, and feel inadequate as parents. Yet, they love and want their

children. As a matter of fact, their child can make be the catalyst for change in their life. In the case of the mother who is a substance abuser, who can overdose, has notoriously poor health and nutrition, and is at high risk for Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS), a change of lifestyle can save her life.

This research study was conducted in order to examine the child-rearing attitudes and parental style of addicted mothers and the impact of their drug use, parental attitudes, and demographic variables on their interactions with their children. The mothers who participated in the study completed a child-rearing practices questionnaire and demographic sheet. The children were tested intellectually and the mother-child dyad was observed.

Generally, greater parental control and less expression of affection were adhered to as values by the participants in the study. Correlations as a function of drug usage and demographic variables suggested that the participants held both sound and inappropriate child-rearing attitudes.

Length of treatment and the age of youngest child emerged as the demographic variables most related to the parental attitude variables. The children scored within the average range of intelligence, however, the range of variation was highly significant.

Findings suggest that mothers who are substance abusers and their children would benefit from treatment. Not unlike

mothers who want "the best for their children", the addictive mother wants the same but is uncertain about her parenting skills and affected by her addiction. Mothers can become sensitive to the developmental stages of children, examine their own life experiences, and support the emotional growth of their children and themselves. Children can receive early stimulation in a supervised, nurturing environment while their mothers learn and engage in these behaviors. Psychologists, as professionals who understand emotion and behavior, are in key positions to help mothers who are substance abusers and their children and bridge the gap which exists between society and the world of addiction.

PREVIEW

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The use of drugs throughout the world and in particular, the United States is widespread. Scores of individuals have become addicted to licit and illicit drugs. Increasingly, women have joined the ranks of the addicted. They are addicted to physically and emotionally devastating drugs: heroin, cocaine, alcohol, and crack. Most women do not abuse a substance exclusively but are polydrug users (Deren, 1986). The effects of heroin, methadone, cocaine, and alcohol will be reviewed and in a sense compared. Most of the women are unmarried, poor, oppressed, and mothers. These women's lives are fraught with the vicissitudes of an addiction which overtakes their lives and becomes more important than eating, sleeping, obeying the law, looking after their health, holding a job, learning a trade, watching their babies, and loving themselves. Yet the love for their babies is what often times gives them a shred of self-esteem, another reason for living, some hope amidst despair. Their children are raised in a home environment with an addicted parent. The parenting skills of these mothers and their attitudes towards childrearing will be examined. Their thoughts as parents are important and noteworthy. The interface of the law and government agencies in the lives of

these families will be highlighted in particular the placement of children in foster care.

The research on children of substance abusers, while originally thought of as scanty, has increased and become better documented over the past twenty years but is still predominantly physiological. An overview of the research around children of substance abusers would include what is known about their mothers, women who are addicted. Sadly, many children are exposed to the drugs in utero and born addicted themselves. In order to understand children of substance abusers one must understand in utero exposure to drugs, lack of prenatal care, illness, prematurity, neonatal mortality, and the neonatal withdrawal syndrome. It is to consider the tragic reality that because women who abuse drugs intravenously often engage in prostitution to support their habits, their babies have the highest odds of becoming afflicted with acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), (Hale, 1991). When this occurs their short lives are filled with pain and loneliness. As children, their behavior, intellectual functioning, development, and adjustment are of paramount importance. And while there are sad findings, there is also happy news and interventions that make a difference.

## Addicted Mothers - An Overview

### Extent of the Problem.

In order to begin to comprehend the magnitude of the population of addicted mothers and consequently the number of children affected by their mother's addiction, a review of available statistics and treatment is required. Statistics for mothers who abuse narcotics are inaccurate due to underreporting, the lack of thoroughness of substance abuse assessments after childbirth, dated studies, and inaccessibility of treatment (Weston, Ivins, Zuckerman, Jones, and Lopez, 1989). Deren (1986), in a study as part of the N.Y.S. Division of Substance Abuse Services' Task Force on Children of Substance Abusers, found that statistics about the number of children of substance abusers were out-of-date. Underreporting of the births of substance abusers on official records is common for such reasons as: 1) children born outside the hospital, 2) mothers who are not tested for drugs, 3) reluctance of mothers and doctors to reveal this information, and 4) addicted women who end their drug use before or during the pregnancy (Mayer & Black, 1977). Furthermore, addicted women have irregular menstrual cycles. It is unclear to what extent their irregular menstrual cycles reduce their fertility and lower their birth rates. On the other hand, generally, addicted women, belong to population groups with higher birth rates. The actual effect of these two factors, irregular menstrual cycles and membership

in higher birth rate population groups, on the birth rate of addicted women is unknown (Deren, 1986).

In spite of these drawbacks to obtaining reliable statistics on the number of addicted women, numbers of addicted mothers on the national, state, and local levels are available. In the United States the estimates of Cuskey and Wathey (1982) are still being utilized with regards to national statistics. They estimated that in the mid-1970's 234,000 children had mothers who were narcotic-dependent. More recently, the ADAMHA News (October, 1988) reported that a hospital survey carried out by the National Association for Perinatal' Addiction Research and Education (NAPARE) in 36 hospitals throughout the country revealed that 11% of deliveries were affected by substance abuse. Eleven percent of all deliveries represents 375,000 births. The range among the hospitals was from 0.4 percent to 27 percent. The different rates among the hospitals were considered a product of difference in thoroughness among the assessments of substance abuse (Weston et al., 1989).

State and local statistics for New York State and New York City respectively are important to examine due to the high number of addicted residents in these areas, greater access to treatment services, and similarity to this research project population. In the mid-1980's (Deren, 1986), the New York State Division of Substance Abuse (DSAS) estimated that there were 43,000 children born to mothers in