

# Mothers' Object Relations Scales (MORS)

- A method of screening early parent-infant relationships recommended for practitioners in the field of infant mental health -

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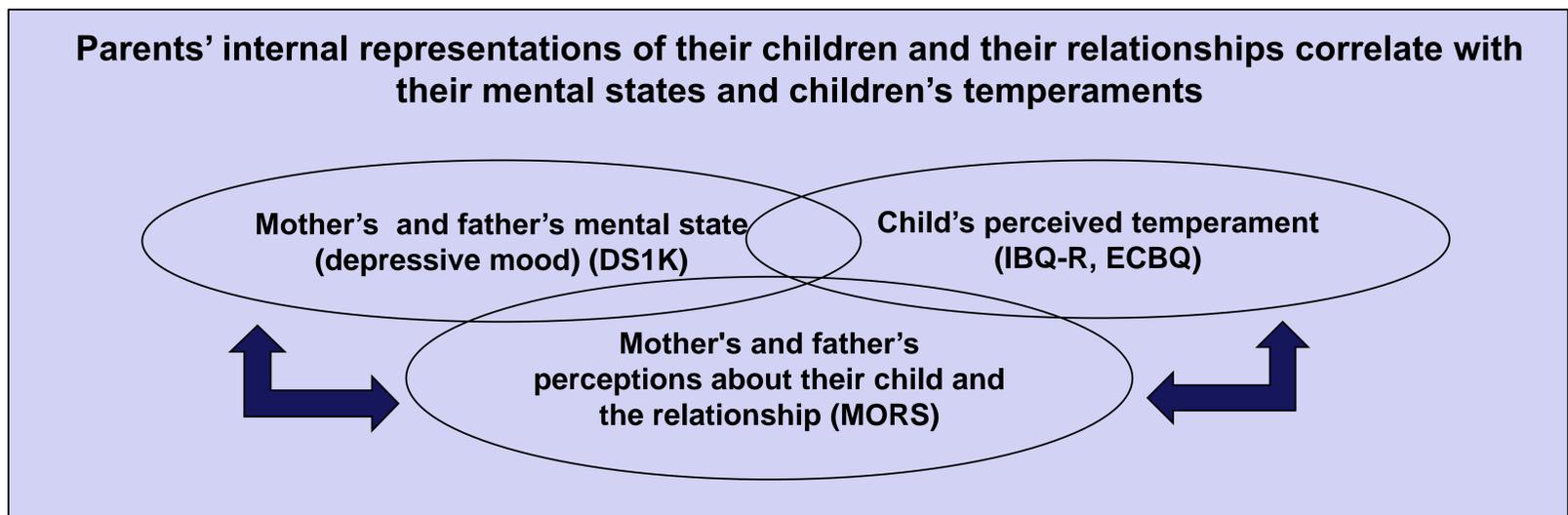
## BACKGROUND

- **Mothers' Object Relations Scales (MORS) instrument assessing parents' internal representation of their child's relationship with them.** Developed by Oates, validated in British and Hungarian moderate-sized samples (Oates, 1998; Oates & Gervai, 2003; Oates et al., 2006).
- **Scales of the 14-item MORS-SF assess parents' perceptions of their infants: 'warmth-coldness' and 'invasion-withdrawal'.**
- **Predictive validity studies** (Milford & Oates, 2009; Davies et al., 2008) in the UK: **MORS-SF as a preventive screening method with other short maternal mental state questionnaires** (e.g. HADS, BDI) recommended.

## THE STUDY

- **'FOR HEALTHY OFFSPRING' Project:** first Hungarian research (n=1164) examining the significance of **risk and protective factors behind early childhood behaviour regulation** (excessive crying, feeding and sleeping) problems.
- **For MORS analyses: 1084 mothers and 337 fathers of 0-36-month-old infants and toddlers; socio-economically diverse**
- **Questionnaires:**
  - **maternal depressive mood** (DS1K; Halmai et al. 2008)
  - **perceived child temperament** (IBQ-R, ECBQ very short forms; Gartstein et al., 2003; Putnam et al., 2006)
  - **MORS Hungarian short-form** (H-MORS-SF; Oates et al., 2006)
- **AIMS:** further testing of of the MORS Hungarian short-form (H-MORS-SF) for 1) **reliability and validity**, 2) **use for screening in monitoring early parent-child relationship.**

## ASSUMED MODEL



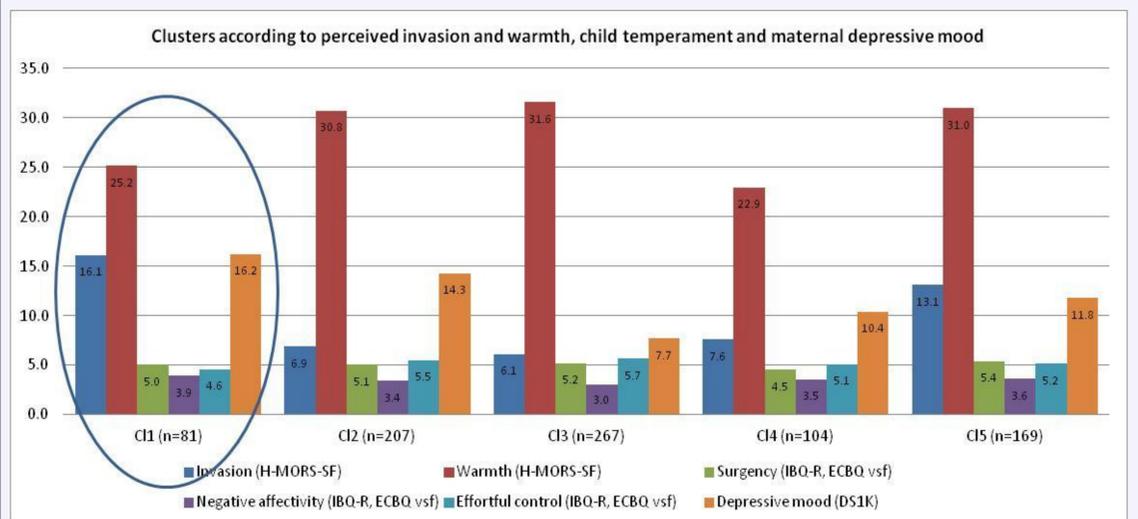
## RESULTS

- **High internal consistency for both H-MORS-SF dimensions:** Cronbach alpha: 0.73-0.84
- **Means (mothers & fathers):** Warmth: 29.19 & 28.54, Invasion: 8.85 & 7.70
- **Mothers and Fathers (n=308) had similar perceptions of their children:** Spearman-correlations for Warmth: Rho=0.51 and Invasion: Rho=0.59; p<0.001
- **H-MORS-SF scales had interpretable and systematic cross-correlations with measures of infant temperament and mental state of both parents**

Scales	Invasion		Warmth	
	Mothers	Fathers	Mothers	Fathers
Depressive mood (DS1K)	0.35 (1031)	0.32 (323)	-0.16 (1031)	-0.23 (323)
Surgency (IBQ-R & ECBQ very short form)	0.15 (1061)	0.13 (324)	0.35 (1061)	0.33 (324)
Effortful control (IBQ-R & ECBQ very short form)	-0.31 (1061)	-0.28 (324)	0.37 (1061)	0.30 (324)
Negative affectivity (IBQ-R & ECBQ very short form)	0.25 (1061)	0.27 (324)	-0.15 (1061)	-0.17 (324)

Spearman correlations (p<0,001), Rho(N)

- **K-means cluster-analysis** (n=828) identified **five interpretable maternal clusters.**
- One cluster comprised **high level maternal depressive mood** (F[4,823]=261.25; p<0.001), **perceptions of high infant invasiveness and negative feelings towards the parent** (F[4,823]=380.51 and 16.34, respectively; p<0.001), and **low self-control** (F[4,823]=43.73; p<0.001).
- **10% of the mother-infant pairs belonged to this cluster.** The combined factors of poor maternal mental state and negative perceptions of the child suggest **heightened risk for disrupted early parent-infant relationships.**



## CONCLUSION

Our results confirm and extend previous results based on smaller samples. Given the convincing psychometric indicators and its ease of administration, the MORS-SF (in conjunction with mental state screening tests: e.g. HADS or BDI) is recommended as an effective tool for screening and monitoring developing parent-infant relationships.