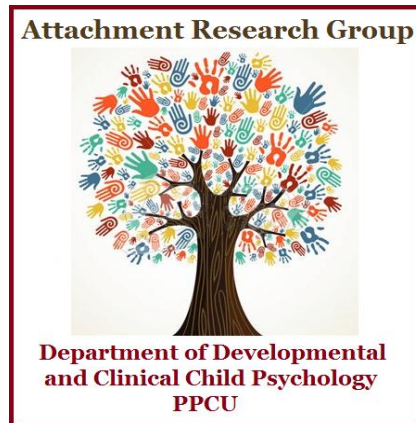


Early Development and Attachment Research Group
Department of Developmental and Clinical Child Psychology
Pázmány Péter Catholic University

Selected Publications
(2009-2014)



ATTACHMENT AND CLINICAL DISORDERS RESEARCH PROGRAMME

The Dynamics of Attachment in Anorexia Nervosa

Serdülő- és Gyermekpszichoterápia, 2009, 9(1),. 67-82. (in Hungarian)

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The Anorexia Nervosa is a kind of mental disorder in which one of the dominant symptoms is the avoidance of food intake and the positive experiences associated with this. Beyond the serious consequences of somatic aspects, psychological symptoms are considered to be equally important in the development of the disorder. From the relational point of view, the salient aspect of disorder is the special quality of emotions observed in the child-mother relationship. This study aims to explore the basic factors that might play important role in shaping the quality of attachment relationship between AN children and their mothers. Projective methods (Family Drawing; Bird's Nest Drawing, Kaiser, 1996), in-depth interviews, attachment questionnaires and the Projective Picture Test of Mother-Child Attachment (Molnár, 2006) were used to assess the quality of attachment and the experiences related to this of 24 anorexic children and their mothers. Our results have demonstrated that the representation of attachment relationship is characterized by a strong tendency to avoid emotional expression in the context of mother-child relations. Anorexic children represented the quality of early maternal caring as lacking nourishment and protection, which in turn



associated with avoidant attachment pattern and the special configuration of the family system.

Keywords: child and adolescent anorexia nervosa, representation of attachment, projective method, maternal nourishment.

The Psychodynamics Of Asthma – The Mother-Child Attachment Perspective
Serdülő- és Gyermekpszichoterápia, 2009, 9(1),17-35. (in Hungarian)

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In this study the attachment patterns and the expression of the emotions in the groups of asthmatic and healthy mother-child pairs were compared. Projective drawing tests (Family Drawing, Mother-Child Drawing, Bird's Nest Drawing) were used to explore the representations of familiar and attachment aspects of this psychosomatic disease.

Maternal aspects of attachment were studied by the Projective Picture Test of Mother-Child Attachment (Molnár, 2006) in which mothers were asked to tell the story of attachment related scenes. This method has been developed for the purpose of this study and is described in detail.

The bidimensional evaluation of the Bird's Nest Drawing revealed a differentiated form of the insecure attachment, namely, the ambivalent attachment in the asthmatic group. This was characterized by representing the family members in isolation from the outside world and a strong clinging to each other at the same time.

The analysis of the Picture Test pointed on the feelings of insecurity of mothers in the asthmatic group in respect to attachment related situations. These feelings were associated with helplessness and fear of losing control because of experiencing inability to influence the physical and emotional consequences of the child's illness. The moments of separation were more conflicted for them.

Compared to the control group, significantly high rate of the inhibition of emotional expression was found in the group of asthmatic children and their mothers.

Keywords: asthmatic disorder – mother-child attachment – expression of emotions – projective methods



The characteristics of attachment in clinical disorders – Multidimensional evaluation of the Bird's Nest Drawing and its clinical application.

Lélekelemzés, 2011, 6(2). 244 –269. (in Hungarian)

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The Bird's Nest Drawing as a projective method for assessing attachment patterns was first used by Kaiser (1996) in her art therapy work with adult patients. She recognized that the Bird's Nest Drawing could symbolize the representation of early experiences of maternal care and nurture as well as its deficits. In our Attachment Research Group at the Institute of Psychology, Pázmány Péter Catholic University, we administered the Bird's Nest Drawing (BND) to nearly 1200 participants, with various age range, health status, and to participants suffering from various clinical disorders. We developed a new coding system of the BND, based on Bowlby's theoretical concept of Internal Working Models, and Marvin and Stewart's concept (1990) on family system and attachment theory. The newly developed multidimensional coding system of the BND enabled us to explore the representations of the dyadic attachment relations, the family system, and the traumatic experiences of the person regarding his/her early attachment relationships.

In this paper we present the elaboration of the Multidimensional Coding System of the BND. and its application in case of borderline personality disorder, depressive and anxiety disorders. Our results have demonstrated that disorder-specific patterns of attachment representations can be identified in respect of the security of the environment, the availability of the attachment figures and the perceived family system.

Possibilities for diagnostic use of the BND Multidimensional Coding System, as well as possibilities for future research are also outlined and discussed.

Keywords: Bird's Nest Drawing - clinical disorders - Internal Working Model - multidimensional coding system of BND - analysis of attachment profiles.

The Psychometric Properties of the Attachment Style Questionnaire – A Hungarian Validation Study.

Ergin, C (ed.): Understanding and embracing diversity. *12th European Congress of Psychology*, 4/8 July, 2011. Istanbul, Turkey. 1224.

<http://ehu.es/gip/publicaciones/congresos/2011/>

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This study examined the psychometric properties of Feeney, Noller, and Hanrahan's Attachment Style Questionnaire (ASQ), a self report measure of non-romantic adult attachment in a Hungarian sample of 1172 participants. Maximum likelihood factor analysis with varimax rotation yielded a slightly different item distribution across the five factors, whereas the original two-factor higher order structure was observed. Convergent and discriminant validity was demonstrated via correlations with other attachment measures (PBI, ECR-R, YSK).

Internal consistencies of the Hungarian subscales were stronger compared to the original ASQ scales. However, Cronbach's alphas differed when age (15–72 years), and of previous experiences in adult romantic relationship (0–42 years) were calculated.

Our results have demonstrated the ASQ as a valid measure of attachment. However, its psychometric properties seem to be sensitive to age and previous experience in romantic relationship. This support the hypothesis that attachment style is a context-dependent and multi-dimensional construct.

Keywords: Attachment Style Questionnaire, Hungarian sample, maximum likelihood factor analysis, psychometrics,

Patterns of attachment in clinical disorders of adolescence and adulthood
Review of Psychology, 2014, 21(1), 55-104, 96-97.

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Background and aims

Studies on the relational aspects of various clinical disorders in adolescence and adulthood have increased significantly in the past few decades. Clinical results of attachment research have pointed out that the adaptive organizations of the attachment system has been affected adversely more or less in almost all disorders. New models of developmental psychopathology stress the importance of the dimensional approach which provides a better framework to our understanding of how the maladaptive patterns of attachment system develop in certain clinical disorders (Fossati et al, 2003, Nagy, 2005, Hámori et al, 2011). Aims of our study were: (1) to assess which aspects and layers of different attachment styles are affected in certain clinical disorders; (2) to explore characteristic patterns of attachment styles based on dimensional analysis; (3) to identify specific attachment related thought contents that might characterize a certain clinical disorder.

Methods

Based on our previous and current research on the characteristics of attachment in clinical disorders (Hámori et al, 2011, 2012) we analysed our database of adolescent and adult participants (n= 135) with depressive and anxiety disorders, borderline personality disorder,



drug addiction and eating disorders. Clinical groups were compared to a control group (n= 145) matched in age and gender. Data were collected as part of the Attachment Research Workshop of the Pázmány Péter Catholic University between 2009 and 2013. Different aspects of attachment patterns were measured by a set of attachment questionnaires (ASQ, Feeney et al, 1994, Hámori et al, 2011; ECR-R, Nagy, 2005; YSQ, Unoka et al, 2004; H-PBI, Tóth et al, 1999) and the projective Bird's Nest Drawing Test (BND, Hámori et al, 2011). Multivariate dimensional analysis were performed to explore the various aspects and layers of attachment patterns of different clinical groups. Qualitative and quantitative analysis of the stories of the BND were conducted to identify specific attachment related thought contents.

Results

Our results have demonstrated the following: (1) disorder-specific patterns of attachment characterize the different clinical disorders; (2) specific patterns can be identified only by applying multidimensional analysis that includes the combinations of variables of different attachment methods; and (3) quantitative and qualitative analyses of the BND have identified (a) significant between group differences in experiencing the security of the environment, the availability of the attachment figures and the perceived family system and (b) provided information about clinical disorder-specific attachment related thought contents, including the perception of the role of significant attachment figures. Multidimensional analysis of attachment related thoughts and experiences assessed by various methods can identify specific patterns of attachment that relate to a certain clinical disorder. The evaluation of these patterns makes it possible to assess the individual aspects and contents of the attachment organization and how it relates to the person's clinical disorder.

Keywords: clinical disorders, adolescence, adulthood, attachment patterns, Bird's Nest Drawing, attachment questionnaires, multidimensional analysis



Relationship between mother's perceptions formed about infants, attachment style, and early feeding habits.

Review of Psychology, 2014, 21(1), 55-104, 91.

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BACKGROUND: One of the most significant question is breastfeeding in terms of healthy beginning of life. According to several authors the breastfeeding determine style of attachment in childhood, development of child-parent relationship and maternal responsiveness (Feldman et al., 1999; Gribble, 2006; Derbyshire, 2008; Schneiderné, 2012). So the society believes that the breastfeeding is indicator for the „good motherhood”.

AIMS: Our questions to explore the relationships between mother attachment style, early feeding habits and mothers perceptions about their infants.

METHODS:

We examined with questionnaire the adult attachment style (Attachment Style Questionnaire, Feeney & Noller, 1994; Hámori, 2012) and the assessing mothers' models of their infants (Mother's Object Relation Scale, Oates & Gervai, 2006; Danis, 2007). Structured interviews were explored maternal feeding habits (Csabai, 2012).

RESULTS:

Our results show that there is no between difference breastfeeding and bottle-feeding mothers in mothers' models of their infants ($z = -1.49$, $p = 0.14$) and adult attachment style. The quality of maternal attachment, maternal perceptions and feeding habits do not show significant correlations.

CONCLUSIONS: The adult attachment quality and the maternal feeding habits should be deeper exploration of the subject of further research.

KEYWORD: adult attachment style, maternal perception, early feeding

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Methodological challenges in measuring attachment. Laymen's interpretations of attachment.

Review of Psychology, 2014, 21(1), 55-104, 97.

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Background

The number of methods for measuring adult attachment have significantly increased over the last decades. Questionnaires (e.g. ASQ, RS, ECR, PBI), in-depth interviews (e.g. AAI) and



projective methods (e.g. picture tests for measuring attachment), due to their different theoretical approach, focus on various aspects of attachment styles and patterns (Collins et al., 2013; Hámori, 2013). This methodological diversity poses a challenge to attachment research, since Bowlby's original concept of attachment is often being distorted or misinterpreted (van Ijzendoorn et al., 2007). However, conceptual diversity is only one reason behind misunderstandings. Another reason would be the inconsistency of participants' interpretations of attachment. Currently there are few studies examining what attachment means for layman (Karantzas, 2012).

Aims of our study: (1) To assess how participating laymen interpret the concept of attachment and what kind of knowledge, thoughts and experiences are associated with it. (2) To determine to which extent laymen's unique interpretations of attachment influence the completion of already validated questionnaires and projective tests.

Method:

Almost 100 subjects (age: 14-62 years) participated in the study. Data collection was conducted as part of the Attachment workshop of the Pázmány Péter Catholic University, with participation of the students attending the course.

Measures: Association list regarding the concept of attachment; in-depth interview about attachment experiences; completion of the ASQ, ECR, PBI questionnaires followed by subjects' evaluation of the items' content and relevance to their own relationship experiences; Picture Attachment Test by Molnár (2009).

Results:

Based on qualitative and quantitative data analysis: (1) laymen's general concepts of attachment do contain common elements, although (2) individual experiences result in different categories of interpretations. (3) The interpretation of questionnaire items is determined by age and experiences about attachment. (4) In-depth interviews and projective picture test data provide information about individual differences in constructing the concept of attachment.

Conclusion: Attachment studies need to consider (1) on which aspect of attachment experiences the given method focuses, (2) what the concept of attachment means for participants and (3) in which context and under which circumstances the given method could be used.

Keywords: adult attachment, laymen's interpretation of attachment, associations, in-depth interview, questionnaires, projective picture test.

