



## **When one childhood meets another – maternal childhood trauma and offspring child psychopathology: A systematic review**

[Dominic T Plant](#), [Susan Pawlby](#), [Carmine M Pariante](#), [Fergal W Jones](#)

### *Article Information*

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### Abstract

#### Background:

Child maltreatment can have a long-term impact on mental health. Less is known about the consequences of child maltreatment on the next generation's psychological wellbeing.

#### Aim:

This systematic review aimed to synthesise the existing empirical literature on the association between a mother's history of maltreatment in her own childhood and her children's experiences of psychopathology, and to characterise potential mediating pathways.

#### Method:

Electronic database and hand searches yielded 12 studies, with a combined sample size of 45,723 mother–child dyads, which met criteria for inclusion in the review.

#### Results:

There was evidence of an overall positive association between a mother's history of child maltreatment and her child's experience of emotional and behavioural difficulties across childhood and adolescence. Maternal psychological distress and poorer parenting practices were found to be key mediating pathways of this association.

#### Conclusion:

Children of mothers who were exposed to maltreatment in childhood appear to be at an increased risk for psychopathology. Mothers with traumatic childhood experiences should be offered improved access to psychological therapies and parenting programmes to help mitigate the potential impact of child maltreatment on future generations.

**Keywords** [Childhood abuse](#), [childhood maltreatment](#), [maternal trauma](#), [adolescents](#), [intergenerational](#)

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