

Maternal Sense of Personal Impact and Child Rearing Attitudes toward Cleft Lip and/or Palate Newborns: The Predictability of Two Risk Factors Existing before Delivery

I-Yuan Liu and Keng-Ling Lay

Department of Psychology, National Taiwan University

Cleft lip and/or palate (CLP) is one of the most common congenital abnormalities in Taiwan. During pregnancy, expectant mothers often assume that the unborn child is perfect without any flaw or defect. Consequently, as a baby with obvious morphological defect is born, disappointment and feeling of personal failure seems inevitable. The disappointment may not only cause negative personal impact on the mother but also affect her child-rearing attitude toward the CLP infant, which, in turn, may have significant impact on the child's future socioemotional adjustment. The main goal of the present study is to investigate the vicissitude of the affecting factors toward maternal child rearing attitude during the first few months after delivery. The present study adopted a short-term longitudinal approach. Fifty cleft lip/palate newborns' mothers completed questionnaires both before and after the first lip repair surgery held between the third to the fifth month after delivery. Two prenatal factors, maternal perceived early relationship with her own parents that is

further separated into two subscales of "acceptance vs. rejection" and "encouragement of independence vs. overprotection", and maternal functional anticipation of the unborn child while expecting, were measured. Two postpartum maternal adjustment indexes of sense of personal impact over giving birth to CLP infant and child rearing attitude, including subscales of "acceptance" and "overprotection", were also measured. Results indicate that the first repair surgery may trigger qualitative change in child rearing attitude and the variation of prenatal factors that are effective in enhancing maternal adjustment process. It is thus suggested that maternal psychological conditions already existed while or even before expecting should be taken into account in designing the intervention program for mothers of CLP and other types of morphologically defect newborns.

Keywords: *Cleft lip, Cleft palate, MFP, infant, congenital defect, maternal child rearing attitude*

