

Summary

The Effects of Video-feedback Intervention to Promote Positive Parenting and Sensitive Discipline for Maternal Sensitivity in Turkey

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Secure attachment seems to be a fundamental resource for optimal child development, and parental, especially maternal sensitivity is the precursor of attachment security. Therefore, in recent decades, many attachment-based intervention programs have been developed mostly in Western countries (Dozier & Roben, 2015; Metin-Orta & Sümer, 2016). Past meta-analytic studies have shown that these interventions, especially those with short sessions are indeed effective in enhancing positive parenting and sensitive responsiveness (*see* Bakermans-Kranenburg et al., 2003).

The aim of the current study is to examine the effectiveness of a culturally sensitive adaptation of the Video-feedback Intervention to Promote Positive Parenting and Sensitive Discipline (VIPP-SD) in Turkey, and to assess its effectiveness on maternal sensitivity. VIPP is an attachment-based intervention that aimed to enhance parental sensitivity and the VIPP-SD program includes parental sensitive discipline as a special focus for preventing children's current and potential externalizing problems. The VIPP-SD program aims to enhance parents' sensitive responsiveness by demonstrating to notice their child's explicit and implicit signals, interpret them correctly, and finally to show prompt responsiveness. For this purpose, the sessions in the program focus on capturing the critical mother-child interactions are called "sensitivity chains". Each video-feedback session is targeted to increase these positive interactions and give specific tips for responsiveness by enhancing mothers' awareness and parenting competence (Juffer et al., 2008a, 2008c).

In sum, in the current study, we aimed to adapt and test the effectiveness of VIPP-SD considering the specific child-rearing context of Turkey using a randomized control design. Designing a culturally sensitive intervention is necessary given that parenting show large

cultural variations and interventions might not have the same effects on Turkish population in comparison to the participants where (VIPP-SD) was originally developed (Netherlands). For example, Turkish mothers were not accustomed to singing with their child, therefore, that task was changed to playing with a pretend tea-set.

Method

The current study included three sessions: (1) the pilot study and adaptation of intervention, (2) the intervention, and (3) the follow-up. In the first session, a pilot study was conducted in order to evaluate the adapted documents in the Turkish cultural context, and to assess inter-rater reliability for the main assessment measures. In the second session, intervention and control visits were completed, and pre-test and post-test scores were collected in order to assess the effectiveness of the intervention. In the third session, a third measurement was completed to assess the long-term effectiveness of the intervention program. Overall, seven visits that were composed of four interventions and three measurements (pre-test, post-test, follow-up) were completed for the intervention group; and three home visits that only included the pre-test, post-test, and follow-up measurements were completed for the control group.

Participants

The study included mothers of 9-33-month-old children, with a relatively lower SES from Ankara and İstanbul ($N_{female} = 48$, $N_{male} = 49$). The sample was randomly divided into control and intervention groups. Four thematic meetings regarding sensitivity and sensitive discipline were held with the 59 mothers who were in the intervention group.

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Materials and Procedure

Through intervention sessions, mothers were shown and provided with feedback on short videos, in which they had been recorded in the previous session, interacting with their children. The control group consisted of 38 mothers and they received four telephone calls regarding child development between the pre-test and post-test assessments. Maternal sensitivity was evaluated through the 'Ainsworth Maternal Sensitivity Scale' (Ainsworth, Bell, & Stayton, 1974) by coding the recorded video clips showing mother-child interactions. Maternal behavior and attitudes towards discipline were assessed by the 'Maternal Attitudes toward Sensitivity and Sensitive Discipline Scale' (Bakermans-Kranenburg & van IJzendoorn, 2003).

Results and Discussion

GLM repeated measures analyses were conducted to test the effectiveness of the intervention program. Between-group factors were experimental (intervention-control), and time (pre-test, post-test, and follow-up) was entered as a within-group factor. Because the program was applied to a non-clinical sample who have relatively high levels of maternal sensitivity, additional analyses were conducted to see if the VIPP intervention had an effect on the mothers' who initially had low levels of sensitivity and were actually in need of the intervention. For this purpose, mothers pre-test scores on the Ainsworth sensitivity scale were calculated and four groups of mothers were formed by using the median split for both intervention and control groups. Mothers having sensitivity below the median in the intervention group were expected to benefit the most from the VIPP-SD.

The results indicated that VIPP-SD was effective in increasing maternal sensitivity in low-middle SES mothers in the relatively collectivistic culture of Turkey. Specifically, the results revealed a significant increase in maternal sensitivity through observed [time*group, for post-test: $F(1, 95) = 8.30, p < .01, \eta^2 = .08$; for follow-up: $F(1, 81) = 11.87, p < .01, \eta^2 = .13$] and reported measures [time*group, for post-test: $F(1, 95) = 6.70, p < .05, \eta^2 = .07$; for follow-up: $F(1, 81) = 4.44, p < .05, \eta^2 = .05$]. Maternal sensitivity scores of mothers who were in the 'risk group' with low levels of sensitivity in the pre-test assessment were found to increase significantly over time ($M_{pretest} = 4.46, S_{pretest} = .80$; $M_{posttest} = 6.07, S_{posttest} = 1.19$; $M_{follow-up} = 6.95, S_{follow-up} = .93$) and benefitted the most as compared to the remaining three groups of mothers. This finding shows that short-term behavior-oriented early intervention programs have higher effectiveness on groups with higher levels of need.

Themes in the VIPP-SD intervention capture sensitive parenting (Ainsworth et al., 1978) (e.g., 'understanding the child', 'sensitivity chain') help mothers to understand and respond to the child's verbal and implicit signals promptly, and appropriately. In addition, observations on the videos that were specifically made of previous mother-child interactions help the mother to focus her attention to the child's behaviors, thus enhancing the mother's ability to observe and develop empathy for the child's experiences. Mothers seemed to gain parenting efficacy as well as sensitivity in meeting their children's needs, through focusing on the scenes in the specifically edited video clips in which mother-child pairs had positive interactions. This notion of the intervention that focuses on the positive interactions encouraged mothers to demonstrate more sensitive behaviors towards their children.

The leading factors that increased the validity of this intervention program's cultural adaptation were the methods used and three critical themes, namely, understanding/acknowledging children, showing a sensitivity chain, and sharing emotions. Some of the mothers reported that they became better at understanding the implicit messages given by their children and regulating their parenting behaviors accordingly. Considering the Turkish cultural context, in this program the messages related to promoting child autonomy and exploratory/regulating control were also given to the mothers in addition to the messages related to closeness, affection, and interdependence. This would be seen as another factor that might increase the validity of this intervention program's cultural adaptation. Taken together, VIPP-SD encouraged sensitive parenting behaviors in the Turkish cultural context.

Researchers should consider the cultural differences while adapting intervention programs, and the intervention program should be adapted in tune with the daily practices and values in the given cultural context. For instance, in the pilot study, it was observed that Turkish mother-child pairs usually do not sing together, so they found this task difficult. Therefore, mother-child pairs were asked to play with the toy tea set, as part of playing house, instead of singing together as was used originally in the program. In this sense, the cultural differences in parents' attitudes and behaviors and the culture-specific practices in the daily context were taken into consideration during the adaptation process of the VIPP-SD intervention program.