Child maltreatment: qualitative review of theoretical and methodological trends in intervention programs with an attachment perspective

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Abstract.

This review provides a qualitative comparative analysis of theoretical and methodological aspects of 27 studies in which the results of the implementation of programs involved in child maltreatment are presented with an attachment perspective. The studies were examined following the Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network. It was found that the programs promote the development of maternal sensitivity, mentalization or reflective functioning and empathy, however, the underlying mechanisms are not differentiated according to the type of abuse to intervene. Likewise, it was found that despite the recognition of the mother's violent childhood experiences as one of the main predisposing factors for child abuse, it is a variable that is scarcely considered in the programs examined. These findings indicate the importance of developing intervention programs that consider a cumulative ecological risk perspective.

Keywords: Child abuse, intervention programs, attachment perspective, systematic review.

Introduction

Research indicates that the measures adopted to reduce the incidence of child

maltreatment cases, specifically in Latin America and the Caribbean (PAHO and UNICEF,

2017), have not been sufficient and that it is necessary to deepen the understanding,

dissemination and contexts in which the phenomenon is presented and reworked and, above all, interdisciplinary work to achieve more effective interventions (Grinberg, 2015; Loredo-Abdalá et al.) However, a relevant study by Bakermans-Kranenburg et al. (2003) presents a meta-analysis with effective results in modifying insensitive parenting and insecure attachment. Other authors have recently conducted a meta-analysis (van IJzendoorn et al., 2019) with a general synthesis approach determining that the background with the largest effect size was parental experience in child abuse, partner violence, and parental personality. Regarding the intergenerational transmission of child abuse, Bérubé, Blais, Fournier, Turgeon, Forget, Coutu, and Dubeau (2020) found that mothers with a severe history of abuse have more difficulty recognizing the child's emotions, reducing sensitive response and generating continuity in this behavior.

Subsequently, the search led to the identification of two types of programs: programs focused on risk factors (Casillas et al., 2015; Temcheff et al., 2018), and programs of universal application (Pisani-Altafim and Martins-Linhares, 2016). In these studies, there was a greater tendency to describe common programs components (Temcheff et al., 2018), as well as the effectiveness of factors in programs implementation (Casillas et al., 2015). However, from the perspective of Sprague-Jonesa, Singh, Rousseau, Counts, and Firman (2020), there is a need to promote programs based on protective factors.

A different position is found in another meta-analysis, in which the authors identified more significant effect sizes in programs components than in contextual factors or structural elements (Gubbels, van der Put, Assink, 2019), an aspect on which van der Put, Assink, Gubbels and Boekhout (2018) agree, pointing out that parenting represents a representative effect size.

The foregoing highlights the need for a qualitative study focused on methodological and theoretical aspects, which favors a better understanding of the main intervention variables, theoretical trends and main measurement instruments. For this, a Comparative Qualitative Analysis (ACC) (Melendez-Torres, Leijten & Gardner, 2019) is used, making use of the Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network, an instrument that allows recognizing the level of evidence and degree of recommendation of the studies. Vlahovicova, Melendez-Torres, Leijten, Knerr & Gardner (2017), point out the importance of understanding how rearing programs work, given the complexity of the interrelated components involved, a position in which Put et al. (2018) also agree.

This review sets the context for research into the risk factors associated with child maltreatment over the period 1984-2020. It accounts for the development of knowledge in relation to this phenomenon and allows us to affirm that the experience of parental childhood abuse, a risk factor currently associated with child abuse, is hardly included in the programs reviewed here. Additionally, an evaluation of the level of evidence and degree of recommendation is presented, which contributes to strengthen the structure and implementation of the programs. Finally, this review points out the need to advance in studies that allow a better definition of mediation models and potentially divergent precursors in the different types of abuse.

Empirical Background

Victimization of children occurs mainly in the context of marital violence (Li et al., 2020). Some risk factors have been identified, consumption of psychoactive substances, family isolation, social exclusion and socioeconomic inequality (Vial and others, 2020;

García-Panal and others, 2016; Aguiar and others, 2015; Salinas-Quiroz and Posada, 2015; Pulido and others, 2013; WHO, 2009).

A search conducted during the period 1984-2020 determined that most relationships involving child abuse are associated with low rates of mother-child interaction (Bousha and Twentyman, 1984). It is also noted that mothers with a history of child abuse tend to be over-responsive to their children when faced with stressful stimuli (Bauer & Twentyman, 1985).

On the other hand, it is found that the social conditions associated with adolescent pregnancy can affect the mental health of mothers (Koniak-Griffin & Lesser, 1996). Therefore, it is important to strengthen the quality of functional social support, in order to promote the development of self-esteem and positive affiliation with the fetus (Koniak-Griffin, 1989).

Therefore, it is necessary to consider the trade-offs between context and maternal sensitivity in less stable and more stressful settings (De Wolff & van Ijzendoorn, 1997; De Falco et al., 2014).

Thus, it has been found that child abuse is more likely to occur when mothers are depressed, consume alcohol, care for more than one child, or have been separated from their own mothers before age 14. This predisposition is greater in mothers who also have low social support (Kotch et al., 1999; Firk et al., 2018).

In addition, Paz Montes et al. (2001), indicate that parents' cognitions mediate verbal and physical aggression directed at children. In this sense, mothers' assessment of children's behavior will be influenced by their own cognitive processes (Milner, cited in Paz Montes et al., 2001, p. 1017).

Research by MacKenzie, Kotch, and Lee (2011) suggests that the total risk burden in early childhood is related to the mother's cognitions about her new role and the indicators of the child's cognitive functioning. In this way, it is possible to state that child abuse can be considered both a risk factor in itself and evidence of the cumulative risk faced by families (Baldwina, Biehala, Allgarb, Cuswortha & Pickettb, 2020; Gubbels et al., 2019; MacKenzie, Kotch, Lee, Augsberger & Hutto, 2011).

In addition, one of the individual risk factors identified as having the greatest impact on the type of bond established between infant and caregiver relates to the caregiver's mental health (Di Venanzio et al., 2017; Sockol et al.).

These results show the need to propose early interventions considering prenatal accompaniment (Myors et al., 2018) that favor the development of the parents' reflexive functioning (Rutherford et al, 2015; Smaling et al., 2015; Mountain et al., 2017; Camoirano, 2017), and secure attachment in the mother-child dyad (Moore et al., 2016; Nieto et al., 2017; Mountain et al., 2017; Plotka & Busch-Rossnagel, 2018).

Method

A qualitative documentary review was carried out (Manterola, Astudillo, Arias & Claros, 2013), making use of the adaptation for studies in basic psychology (Villada & Chaves, 2012; Fernández & Villada, 2015) of the criteria of the Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network [SIGN] (Harbor & Miller, 2001; Primo, 2003), in order to recognize and compare qualitatively the evidences that support the theoretical and methodological constructs on which the studies included in this review are supported. According to Manterola and Zabando (2009), works of this nature must address four important aspects: 1. The designs, 2. The setting or scope, 3. The levels of available evidence and 4. The degrees of recommendation of the

investigations. Together these four aspects allow the ranking of the available evidence and strengthen the studies and therefore their theoretical constructs, by indicating the degrees of recommendation thereof (Goenaga, 2016).

Inclusion criteria

1. Studies on empirically validated child abuse intervention programs.

2. Studies directed at mothers or the mother-child dyad.

3. Studies carried out from the perspective of attachment.

As proposed by Blanco and Rodríguez (2007), an intervention program was considered to be any "activity aimed at the solution of a practical problem that we address with the essential help of a conceptual structure" (p. 27). It is also understood that these interventions fall within the framework of primary health care levels (promotion, prevention, care and rehabilitation), as well as prevention levels (primary, secondary and tertiary) (Vignolo et al., 2011).

Instrument

The review of the selected articles was carried out through an information entry form, which discriminates aspects of interest related to article identification data; objectives, type and design of the investigation; information on the sample and the instruments used; information analysis procedure and results. Subsequently, this information was consigned in a systematization matrix that made it possible to compare both the theoretical foundation and methodological structure of the studies and the structure and methodology of the intervention programs. The analysis achieved in each of the studies was subjected to the SING criteria (Harbor & Miller, 2001; Primo, 2003). The relevance of this instrument is considered given the possibility it offers to emphasize methodological and design aspects (Fernández & Villada,

2015) and after a qualitative comparative analysis exercise, present approximations on the level of evidence on which the studies were based and their degree of recommendation (Melendez-Torres et al., 2019). The criteria that should be considered to define the level of evidence and grade of recommendation for a study, according to the SING, are described in Table 1. *Levels of evidence and degrees of recommendation*

Degrees of recommendation	lation Levels of evidence: Scientific evidence comes from	
<u>^</u>	I.a: systematic reviews, meta-analysis, controlled and	
A Good	randomized experiments.	
Good	I.b: at least one randomized controlled experiment.	
B Moderated	II.a: at least one well-designed, non-randomized, controlled	
	prospective study.	
	II.b: at least one quasi-experimental, well-designed study.	
Modelated	III: well-designed, non-experimental descriptive studies, such	
	as comparative, correlation or case-control studies.	
C IV: documents or opinions of experts and/or clinical		
It is based on expert opinion experiences of prestigious authorities.		

Source: Own construction based on information presented in Harbour and Miller (2001) and Primo (2003).

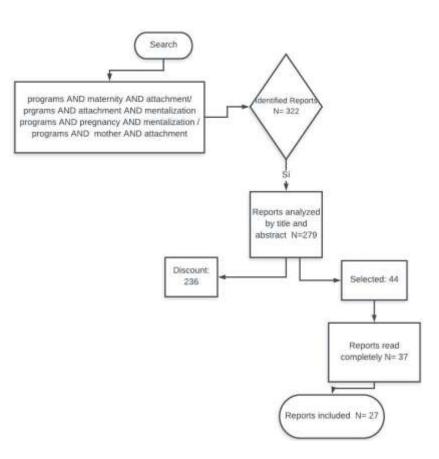
Procedure

The article search was carried out between August and November 2018 and was updated between August and September 2020. The search for the studies was conducted on the Web of Science, NCBI (PubMed), Springer, Cambridge Core, PsycNet APA, and Scopus databases. The filters that were used in each of the searches covered research reports published in English between 2014 and 2020. Search descriptors included: "programs and maternity and attachment"; "programs and attachment and mentalization"; "programs and pregnancy and mentalization"; and "programs and mother and attachment".

Once the refinement filters were used (observation window, area and type of document), 322 reports were identified to be analyzed by title and abstract, thus resulting in 44 reports for complete reading independently by the researchers. 27 of them were selected to

be included in this qualitative review (see Figure 1: search flow chart). For each article, a record sheet was constructed based on the SING guidelines which led to a comparative qualitative analysis and the identification of the levels of evidence on which the studies are based and their degrees of recommendation.

Figure 1.



Search flowchart

Results

The results are presented according to three categories overall results, theoretical trend and variables and measurements. Based on these findings and following SING guidelines (Harbour & Miller, 2001; Primo, 2003), the level of evidence and degree of recommendation

for studies is presented. The studies/programs included in this qualitative review are 27 in

total and are presented in Table 2.

Program	Authors
Mother-Child Education Program (MOCEP)	Ponguta et al., 2020
Parents under Pressure (PuP)	Barlow et al., 2019
Lighthouse Parenting Programme	Byrne et al., 2019
Promoting responsiveness, emotion regulation and attachment in young mothers and infants PRERAYMI	Riva et al., 2019
Before You Were Born (BYWB)	Vazquez & Bergin, 2019
Community HUGS	Ericksen et al., 2018
Psychodynamic-oriented video feedback	Manna & Boursier, 2018
Mom Power Parenting Intervention	Rosenblum et al., 2018
The Video Interaction Guidance (VIG)	Pethica & Bigham, 2018
Mothering from the Inside Out (a mentalization-based intervention for mothers in addiction treatment)	Suchman et al., 2017
Steps Toward Effective and Enjoyable Parenting – STEEP	Suess et al., 2016
Play with Our Children- POC	Brahm et al., 2016
Attachment and Biobehavioral Catch-up- ABC	Yarger et al., 2016
Parents under Pressure –PuP	Barlow et al., 2016
Pro-kind (Adapted from Nurse-Family Partnership -NFP)	Sierau et al., 2016
Parent-Child Clinical Services Program	Ziv et al., 2016
Primary Care – Video Intervention Therapy -PC-VIT	Facchini et al., 2016
Mothering from the Inside Out (a mentalization-based therapy for mothers enrolled in mental health services)	Suchman et al., 2016
The Peek-a-Boo ClubTM	Bunston et al., 2016
Promoting responsiveness, emotion regulation and attachment in young mothers and infants PRERAYMI	Riva et al., 2016
The Baby Bond	van der Walt et al., 2016
Tuned In Parenting –TIP	King et al., 2015
Mom Power	Muzik et al., 2015
Ulm model	Pillhofer et al., 2015
Positive Parenting and Sensitive Discipline - VIPP-SD	Pereira et al., 2014
My Baby & Me	Guttentag et al., 2014
Parent-Child Psychological Support Program	Pons-Salvador et al., 2014

Table 2. Intervention programs with an attachment perspective

Overall results

The identification of the main intervention variable made it possible to organize the studies according to the problems addressed in maternal mental health, other risk conditions and child development.

Mother's mental health

These programs were oriented toward the intervention of postpartum depression,

anxiety, intellectual disability and parental stress, posttraumatic stress disorder, and

consumption of psychoactive substances. Table 3 presents a relationship between the

programs and their main results.

Table 3.	Overall	results.	Maternal	mental	health
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Programs	Characteristics of the intervention	Results
PuP (2019)	The parents were receiving treatment for a drug or alcohol problem and were caring for a child under 2.5 years of age. Exclusion criteria: the baby was not currently residing with the main caregiver, pregnant women, active and continuous domestic abuse or active suicidal psychosis or ideation.	emotional regulation and measures of depression, anxiety and stress, however, no significant differences were found for psychopathology and parental stress.
BYWB (2019	At the end of the 90-day treatment, the women completed 12 sessions in each of the five groups parenting education, women's issues, prenatal education, bonding and attachment, and)development. In addition, they completed 12 hours of individual therapy. The program is based on the fact that parenting education has been shown to improve behavior problems in children and decrease parental stress.	
Community HUGS (2018)	It focuses on four tasks that seek to improve parent attachment relationships and behaviors; these relate to the parents' IWMs for attachment, new animated experiences, and the therapeutic relationship. The interventions are divided into 10 weekly sessions of approximately 60-90 minutes in duration.	In the study there were significant improvements for parental stress, parenting outcomes, and the mother-child relationship; moderate results in depression and anxiety. The pilot study only showed significant changes in post- treatment for maternal self-efficacy and a decrease in anxiety, stress and depression.

Mom Power Parenting Intervention (2018)	It aims to improve sensitive and educated parenting, reduce mental health problems, and promote positive and balanced attributions towards the child. It uses a multi-family group format to encourage participation and retention of participants, provide social support, and connect parents to other services.	The program allowed a change in the typology of the representations, evidenced by an increase in balanced representations and a decrease in unbalanced ones. As well as a significant increase in parental reflexivity.
Video Interaction Guidance (VIG) (2018)	It aims to improve the interactive behaviors of parents. It is a short-term intervention that can demonstrate its effectiveness in three or five sessions. It uses video comments which involves showing parents a video of their own interaction with their children and reflecting on what made the interaction successful.	A perception of greater security to be heard by their children was fostered, there were improvements in interaction reflected in play and in less intrusive behavior, there was also greater interest in exercising more sensitive discipline.
POC (2016)	It aims to strengthen the positive interaction between caregiver and child during learning and play as it improves skills and promotes the development of children from 0 to 48 months. Is achieved through group sessions of 2.5 hours including 14 couples to favor interaction following the child's indications and interests and promote reflection on this; home visits individual interviews.	POC was positively associated with maternal sensitivity for mothers of older children but not for those of younger children also with a lower level of parental stress. There were no significant differences between the groups in terms of maternal depression.
Parent-Child Clinical Services Program (2016)	It seeks to alter the representations of the parents. PPP and Dyadic Psychotherapy were included, dyadic work is done with a parent, child, and doctor to help parents reflect on the emotional significance of their child's behavior.	There were significant correlations between maternal insight and sensitivity. The program had effects on improving sensitivity and decreasing intrusive behavior, but not with the constructs of hostility and separation. Likewise, the children responded more positively in the interaction with their mothers.
MIO (2016)	It is a 12-session manualized individualized therapy to enhance the ability of RF parents in the parenting role. In session the mother determines the focus of the discussion. If the child is not the immediate subject the therapist will remine him when the time is right.	depression, the magnitude of change was lof average effect. There were no significant changes over time in maternal sensitivity, child participation, and dyadic reciprocity.
MIO (2017)		Compared to standard programs the most significant MIO results are observed in the

		potential RF; a higher quality of
		renderings developed but this is not
		remarkable. The mother-child interaction
		had moderate results as did the mothers'
		substance abuse. There were no significant
		effects for maternal psychiatric symptoms
		or child attachment status.
	MP is a manualized multifamily	Significant reductions were found for the
	intervention, of 13 sessions (3 individual	clinical symptoms and diagnoses of
	sessions and 10 group sessions) focused on	depression and post-traumatic stress
Mom Power	improvements in self-care / mental health	disorder. As well as for maternal
(2015)	and parental competence in mothers with	helplessness and impotence. The
(2013)	experiences of trauma or abuse and	improvements in parental reflexivity were
	psychopathology (depression with /	only at the trend level.
	without PTSD).	-

SAA: substance/alcohol abusing; RF: reflective functioning, IWM: Internal Working Models, PPP: Parent–Child Psychotherapy Program.

With regard to the exercise of motherhood changes in maternal sensitivity, reflective functioning, parental representations, parenting practices and other associated constructs such as hostility, intrusiveness and attachment are alluded to. However, the results are presented in terms of trends and it is not clear whether the improvement in these aspects depended in any case on the decrease in psychopathological symptoms. Except in the results of the BYWB program, in which it is evident that after its implementation parental stress decreased from 229.72 (43.37) to 217.57 (39.17) (Vazquez & Bergin, 2019) stress that contrary to the hypothesis of the researchers it was not superior to the normative group.

With regard to the use of psychoactive substances results were found in the adaptation of the Mothering from the Inside Out (MIO) program, the Parents Under Pressure (PuP) program and the Before You Were Born (BYWB) program. For this population the MIO program produced moderate effects on potential reflective functioning and parental representations, while the PuP program produced improvements in relation to depression, anxiety and parental stress, however, these results were not related to improved substance use or mother-child interaction. For its part, BYWB potentially affected the risks of relapse to

substance use and the use of child abuse since it decreased isolation and depression and increased parental competence, in this regard Vazquez & Bergin (2019) argue that this may be due to the willingness to access the program, which favors the perception of achievement and hope as well as less social pressure and access to the substance so that the treatment itself becomes a support scenario, that is, plays a role in stress or depression reduction.

Other risk conditions

Programs aimed at intervening in work-related conflicts, exposure to violence, traumatic experiences, poverty, early motherhood, and their relationship to severe or negligent maternal responses were considered. In Table 4, a relationship between the programs and their main results is presented.

Table 4. Overall results. Other risk conditions

Programs	Characteristics of the intervention	Results
	Reports improvements in maternal	Compared with CG the use of severe
	knowledge, disciplinary style, and socio-	discipline in parenting practices was
	emotional development. It was	reduced. It also reduced the stress of the
	implemented in 25 group sessions of 3	parents in relation to high attendance at the
MOCEP	hours each. The curriculum includes topics	
(2020)	on child development, the importance of	mothers experienced social support, female
(2020)	play in development, parenting practices,	empowerment, decreased individual
	health and hygiene, and maternal	distress and better pragmatic knowledge of
	empowerment. The program combines	the child. The emotions and behaviors of
	lectures, practical demonstrations, and	the children did not show reduction in their
	homework to complete	difficulties after the intervention.
	It is designed to foster parental curiosity	The treatment produced favorable effects
Lighthouse Parenting Programme	about the child's world and reflection on	on parental sensitivity, self-efficacy and
	their own thoughts, feelings, and reactions.	
	It is a 20-week intervention that works with	
(2019)		improvement was achieved in
()	is that parents are a beacon, providing a	mentalization and global distress levels.
	soft, watchful light for their child's journey.	
	The dyads were recruited from three escort	
	services in Milan. The inclusion criteria	quality of maternal mindsets, mother-infant
	were speaking and understanding Italian;	interaction styles, and maternal ability to
PRERAYMI	between 14 and 21 years old; absence of	adequately assess the infant's
(2019)	maternal psychopathology, uncomplicated	developmental level. Thus, the sensitivity
	delivery, and healthy, full-term babies.	increased and the maternal control style
	Maternal mentality was assessed from a 5-	decreased, the cooperative style of the
	minute videotaped free play session.	children also improved. Demonstrated its

	Mothers' speech was transcribed and comments were made that did not refer to the baby's mind or emotion and that included an internal state term that refers to the baby's mind or emotion.	effectiveness regardless of other risk conditions .
Psychodynami c-oriented video feedback (2018)	Provides support and prevention for mothers with high potential dyadic risk due to constant levels of WFC. Through a program defined in this way, identifying specific risk conditions reinforce the response capacity of mothers towards their children.	The most beneficial aspect of the program was called the "disruptive effect" in that it allowed mothers to accept the image of themselves reflected in the video, recognize their child's signs and achieve greater identification with their child.
STEEP (2016)	To support the development of secure attachment, enhance maternal sensitivity, encourage mothers, and promote the development of effective social support, the implementation process focused on IWMs to reflect on various influences on themselves, as well as their potential influences on parenting.	The STEEP group was 3.1 times more likely to develop a secure attachment compared to the GC. Comparison between groups for disorganized attachment revealed an average effect in favor of the STEEP group at both 12 and 24 months. Only at 24 months were STEEP mothers more likely to understand and assess the needs of their children.
The Peek-a- Boo ClubTM (2016)	Reworking in a positive way relational ruptures and attachment difficulties resulting from exposure to family violence. 11 sessions were divided into 8 weekly groups of 2 hours, 1 meeting group and individual sessions before and after the group.	Mothers reported significantly more socially competent and less troubled children. 10% of the participants showed a significant improvement in general functioning and enjoyment of the MPAS interaction and 3% showed in the quality of MPAS attachment, the participants did not show significant changes or deterioration in the absence of hostility.
ABC (2016)	Teaches parents to care for their children when they are in distress; Responding in a sensitive way through sessions, 1 and 2 idea that children need care, 3 and 4, encourage sensitive behavior, 5 and 6 help to identify and respond to children's signals, 7 and 8 favor the exploration of the parenting experience. Sessions 9 and 10 opportunity for coaches to consolidate achievements.	aFor sensitivity there was a medium effect while for intrusiveness there was a
PuP (2016)	Intensive support and timely assessment and decision-making for vulnerable pregnant women. It refers to women with domestic abuse, drugs or alcohol or between 14 and 35 years and are between 18 and 28 weeks of gestation. Prenatal evaluation and intervention focuses on the mother's mental state and well-being, including the social context, they are evaluated after delivery	A better development and quality in the relationship of care, values, expectations and maternal skills was achieved. As well as better functioning in the capacity to regulate emotions in the mother and better lintegration with the wider social context.

(two months), using the CARE index and the HOME.

Pro-kind (2016)	It focused on improving maternal prenatal health, family functioning, parental skills, and financial self-sufficiency to enhance child development and reduce child abuse.	A marginally significant effect on social support was observed. The program did not have significant effects on mother-infant satisfaction, maternal skills, school development in mothers and birth control. The children in the IG showed higher levels of mental development.
PRERAYMI (2016)	It seeks to improve the mother-child relationship in the baby's first year of life, increasing maternal responsiveness and reflexivity and mother-child dyadic emotional regulation. It is based on three different approaches: video intervention, developmental counseling and psychological counseling.	The adolescent mothers of the IG showed an increase in the sensitivity style and a decrease in the control style. The effect of the intervention was greater at 3 to 6 months than at 6 to 9 months; thus there was improvement in the cooperative style, but not in the compulsive, complacent and difficult child style. There was no significant effect between the effect of the intervention and the quality of maternal attachment.
Ulm model (2015)		the average socio-emotional development was significantly higher in the high-risk
VIPP-SD (2014)	Short-term intervention that improves sensitivity and discipline using video feedback. In the first session a mother-child interaction profile is developed. In the following four sessions the difference between attachment and exploratory behavior is examined, "speaking for the child", the "chain of sensitivity" and the importance of sharing emotions, empathy and understanding of the child as disciplinary strategies.	Severe discipline decreased in the IG but not in the GC. The changes occurred only under the most stressful conditions.
Parent-Child Psychological Support	Supports parents during the first 18 months of the baby's life to promote protective systems in children. 6 individual visits of	The results indicated that at least three visits were needed to produce significant changes in the CAP. It was observed that

Program	45/60 minutes are made from 3 months of	
(2014)	age to 18 months or 24 months if	attachment was higher when the family
	prolonged. In these, the development of the	e made four visits to the program and when
	child and their interaction with objects and	the mothers' CAP scores were reduced in
	with the main caregiver are evaluated.	the subsequent evaluation.
		Maternal behaviors such as contingent
	Designed for parents of vulnerable children	
	it includes modules that teach interactive	stimulation and frequency of verbal
My Baby & Me (2014)	skills for responsive parenting. The high-	scaffolding were the most sustained over
	intensity intervention began during the	time. There was little evidence of
	third trimester of pregnancy and continued	differences between adolescents and adult
	until the child reached 30 months of age	mothers. It was found that the high
	completing 55 sessions with individual	intensity children showed better results in
	Indians. The low intensity provides basic	the involvement with their environment,
	information on the development of the	expressive language and complexity of
	child through printed informational	playing with toys. There were no significant
	material.	differences between infant cognition and
		language assessment.

GC: control group, GI: intervention group, MPAS: Maternal Postnatal Attachment Scale, CAP: Child Abuse Potential Inventory, WFC: The Work-Family Conflict Scale.

Mothers achieved better results in sensitivity, maternal mentality, maternal skills, emotional regulation and integration with the wider social context. However, there were no favorable effects on reducing maternal hostility, mother-infant relationship satisfaction, mothers' school performance and birth control. With respect to child related outcomes significant improvements were found in attachment, social skills, reduction of problem behaviors, mental development, engagement with their environment and expressive language.

Child development

The programs were aimed at prenatal stimulation, child mental health, well-being, and healthy child development. Only the *Tuning in Parenting* program makes an evaluation of its effects favorable results are related to an improvement in carer-infant interaction, which in turn influences children's capacity for expression and exploration. However, it had no effect on maternal emotional well-being. Table 5 presents a relationship between the programs and their main results.

Table 5. Overall results. Child development

Programs	Characteristics of the intervention	Results
The Baby Bond (2016)	The program effect is measured by stimulating the chemosensory system, auditory, somatosensory, vestibular, neura and visual, these were self-administered in the comfort of their own home where they have access to the environment and the necessary instruments.	control group indicating that The Baby
PC-VIT (2016	Supports the sensitivity and awareness of caregivers to promote children's mental health. In support of the purposes of the intervention, two more WBVs were added at 2 and 4 months, during these there was a b)medical visit of 15 to 20 minutes in which a video clip was recorded for feedback of 40 to 45 minutes. The subject of the video recording changed with the age of the baby.	All participants rated the intervention as helpful in improving their ability to better understand their own and their infants' behaviors. They reported feeling more aconfident as parents and more aware of
TIP (2015)	Enhance maternal reflexivity in the mother-child relationship to develop a sensitive attunement to the signals of babies and the adequate capacity to respond to these signals. It was carried out in a group of four to six mothers for 2 hours a week for 9 weeks simultaneously their children attended a group of babies.	The participants showed more returns and reciprocal feelings of the initiative of their children, thus, they encouraged the exploration of the environment and allowed the expression of a variety of emotions, in addition, they offered adequate comfort when necessary. There were no significant effects on depression, anxiety, and stress.

PAI: Prenatal Attachment Inventory MAI: Maternal Attachment Inventory

Theoretical trend

The most frequently cited reference in relation to the conceptualization of maternal sensitivity is Mary Ainsworth, who maintains that it is the capacity that the mother has to respond to the needs and demands of the child according to the moment of development in which the child is, and do it precisely, appropriate, rapid and contingent manner. Likewise, it is pointed out that the capacity of response demands, in turn, an interpretative capacity of the need that is at the base of the demands. This approach gives rise to the relationship of sensitivity with other constructs, such as, maternal attachment, internal representations of work in mothers and reflexivity. Finally, it is noted that the mother's response constitutes a

model for her children to develop a capacity for self-regulation at both the cognitive and behavioral levels.

On the other hand, mentalization is presented as the mother's capacity to reflect on the child's inner states like thoughts, emotions and intentions and with it, the understanding of their behavior as well as the mental states of herself. This process is in turn associated with a capacity for regulation of affect and superior functioning within the social world. As a result, mentalization favors that the mother recognizes her limitations in order to always know what her child is thinking and, therefore, be more available to seek to tune into her signals. The authors argue that, as a whole, sensitivity and awareness are determining factors in the attachment and self-image system that the child incorporates.

The relationship between mentalization and reflexivity clarifies that reflective functioning is the observable and measurable manifestation of the capacity to mentalize, allows access to the internal working models of parents or parental representations and their application in insightful attitudes related to the child's behaviors and feelings. This suggests that when mentalization or reflective functioning intervenes sensitivity improves. Only two of the programs (Byrne et al., 2019; Riva et al., 2019) specified the differences in the approach to these variables even when they are theoretically recognized as overlapping concepts and established connection paths between them, for example through the mental mentality, interface concept between the representational and the behavioral level (Meins as cited in Riva et al., 2019).

Finally, empathy was referred to as a mother's capacity and ability that favors her understanding of the child's internal states but the differences between empathy and maternal sensitivity are not established.

It can therefore be seen that the programs observe different manifestations of child abuse without making a distinction between the mechanisms underlying each one which influences both the definition of the dependent variables and the selection of the measurement instruments.

Variables and Measurements

In terms of the instruments used, it was identified that the most used questionnaire was *The Parenting Stress Index Short Form* [PSI/SF] (Abidin, 1995), referenced in eight of the studies (Barlow et al., 2019; Byrne et al., 2019; Riva et al., 2019; Brahm et al., 2016; Ericksen et al., 2018; Manna & Boursier, 2018; Riva et al., 2016; Muzik et al., 2015) and whose reliability varied between .72 and .95.

The most measured variable in the studies was maternal depression, the most used instruments for its measurement were: *The Depression Anxiety and Stress Scale* [DASS] (Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995) (Ericksen et al, 2018; Suchman et al., 2016; Muzik et al., 2015), with reliability ranging from .73 to .81; *The Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale* [EPDS] (Cox, Holden, & Sagovsky, 1987) (Ericksen et al., 2018; Brahm et al., 2016; Muzik et al., 2015), with reliability levels between .87 and .88; and *The Postpartum Depression Screening Scale* [PPDS] (Beck & Gable, 2001) (Rosenblum et al., 2018; King et al., 2015; Pons-Salvador et al., 2014), with reliability levels between .93 and .99.

The most widely used semi-structured interview in measuring internal parental work representations was *The Working Model of the Child Interview* [WMCI] (Rosenblum et al., 2009; Zeanah & Benoit, 1995) (Rosenblum et al., 2018; Suchman et al., 2017; King et al., 2015) with an inter-class correlation coefficient [ICC] ranging from .62 to .92. Likewise, the most referenced semi-structured interview for identifying reflective parental functioning was *The*

Parent Development Interview [PDI] (Slade, Aber, Berger, Bresgi, & Kaplan, 2003) (Byrne et al., 2019; Ponguta et al., 2020; Vazquez & Bergin, 2019; Suchman et al., 2017; Suchman et al., 2016; Riva et al., 2016), with an ICC ranging from .77 to .93.

The most widely used structured observation strategies were Ainsworth et al. (1978), *The strange situation attachment procedure* (Suchman et al., 2017; Brahm et al., 2016; Pillhofer et al., 2015; Guttentag et al, 2014) with an ICC of .72, and *The CARE-Index* (Crittenden, 2008) (Barlow et al., 2019; Riva et al., 2019; Manna & Boursier, 2018; Ziv et al., 2016; Suchman et al., 2016;) with an ICC of .83 for infant behavior and .88 for maternal behavior.

Finally, the most referenced instrument for the measurement of child development specifically in cognitive functioning and language was *The Bayley Scales of Infant and Toddler Development Screening Test* (Bayley, 2006) (Suchman et al., 2017; Pillhofer et al., 2015; Pons-Salvador et al., 2014). Regarding this instrument, the studies examined do not present reliable data and it should be noted that the lack of this information was a characteristic aspect of most of the studies examined.

Levels of evidence and degrees of recommendation

There is evidence of a methodological trend of an experimental and quasiexperimental nature, in this way most of the studies are randomized controlled trials, which resulted in that, of the 27 studies reviewed, four had a level of evidence Ia and eight Ib, in that sense, the research supporting these studies favors their recommendation. The classification of studies by level and degree of recommendation is shown in Table 6.

Study	Level of evidence		Level of recommendation
Ericksen et al., 2018	I. a	٨	Its scientific evidence comes from
Suchman et al., 2017	I. a	A	meta-analyzes, systematic reviews,

Table 6. Levels of evidence and degrees of recommendation

Sierau et al., 2016	I. a		and controlled trials with or without
Suchman et al., 2016	I. a		randomness. There is 'good'
Ponguta et al., 2020	I. b		research-based evidence to support
Barlow et al., 2019	I. b		the recommendation.
Riva et al., 2019	I. b		
Rosenblum et al., 2018	I. b		
van der Walt et al., 2016	I. b		
Yarger et al., 2016	I. b		
Pereira et al., 2014	I. b		
Guttentag et al., 2014	I. b		
Riva et al., 2016	II. a		
Pillhofer et al., 2015	II. a		
Suess et al., 2016	II. b		
Brahm et al., 2016	II. b	В	Its scientific evidence comes from prospective controlled studies, quasi-experimental studies, or well- designed non-experimental descriptive studies. There is 'moderate' research-based evidence to support the recommendation.
Byrne et al., 2019	III		
Vazquez & Bergin, 2019	III		
Ziv et al., 2016	III		
Bunston et al., 2016	III		
Muzik et al., 2015	III		
King et al., 2015	III		
Pons-Salvador et al.,	III		
2014			
Manna & Boursier, 2018	IV	С	Its scientific evidence comes from
Pethica & Bigham, 2018	IV		documents or opinions of experts
Barlow et al., 2016	IV		and / or clinical experiences of
Facchini et al., 2016	IV	-	prestigious authorities. The
			recommendation is based on expert
Source: Own construction by	sed on the an	alveis of studios	opinion or a consensus panel.

Source: Own construction based on the analysis of studies and the guidelines of the *Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network* [SING] (Harbour & Miller, 2001; Primo, 2003).

Discussion

The background to this study demonstrates or reinforces the idea that, in order to mitigate child abuse, it is essential to intervene in a variety of variables since the causes of child abuse are not only due to the dyadic mother-child relationship but also to individual, family and social conditions, in other words, the context in which this relationship is built (WHO, 2009). Respectively, they can be considered the violent childhood experiences and the suffering of mental disorders of the mother, the care of several children and the low social support and conditions of poverty that in itself is related to another diversity of unfavorable

conditions for the mother (Kotch et al., 1999; Firk et al., 2018; García-Panal et al., 2016; Aguiar et al., 2015; Salinas-Quiroz & Posada, 2015; Pulido et al., 2013). Conditions that may involve stress and that undoubtedly influence the exercise of motherhood as they become risk factors associated with abusive behavior towards children (de Wolff & Van Ijzendoorn, 1997; de Falco et al., 2014).

In this sense, this systematic review identified a predominance of studies aimed at intervening in the conditions defined in this study as "other risk factors", including workfamily conflict, exposure to violence, traumatic experiences, poverty and the relationship of these with negligence. maternal situations or responses. The results show improvements in maternal sensitivity, maternal competencies, dyadic emotional regulation, integration with the broader social context by the mother, attachment bonds, social competencies, mental development and expressive language of the child. However, despite the intervention, hostile maternal behavior and experiences of dissatisfaction in the mother-infant relationship persisted suggesting the risk of relapse into negative parental behavior.

Although to a lesser extent, programs aimed at maternal mental health care were also found specifically with regard to anxiety, depression, stress and post-traumatic stress disorder. Results showed improvements in terms of maternal sensitivity, reflective functioning, parental representations, and parenting practices. However, it was not clear whether the improvements were related to the decrease in psychopathological symptoms.

In general, it was found that the programs are characterized by being structured between 7 and 20 sessions, oriented to the development of parental competencies, mainly in the mother-child dyad.

Risk factors especially individual ones have been shown to have greater implications for the style of the mother-child bond (Di Venanzio et al, 2017; Sockol et al., 2014; Nieto et al., 2017), which reveals the importance of attending to these conditions starting with the prenatal period (Myors et al., 2018; Rutherford et al., 2015; Smaling et al., 2015; Camoirano, 2017; Moore et al., 2016; Nieto, 2017; Mountain et al., 2017; Plotka & Busch-Rossnagel, 2018).

In relation to the above, a relevant aspect to mention is that despite the recognition of the mother's violent childhood experiences as one of the main predisposing factors of child abuse (MacKenzie, Kotch & Lee, 2011; MacKenzie, Koth, Lee, Augsberger & Hutto, 2011; van IJzendoorn et al., 2019) this is a variable that is only intervened in two programs (Byrne et al., 2019; Riva et al., 2019). This shows the relevance of developing intervention programs in which, in addition to considering the current conditions of the context in which the dyadic relationship develops, there is a perspective of cumulative ecological risk which allows recognizing the predisposing conditions in the intergenerational transmission of abuse (Bérubé et al., 2020).

The mentioned in the previous paragraphs, could well be related to the lack of conceptual delimitation found with respect to the concepts of sensitivity, mentalization, reflective functioning and empathy; this difficulty was also found by Boorman et al. (2019). McLaughlin (2017) distinguished between two types of adverse experiences in childhood threatening experiences involving harm or threat of harm and deprivation experiences involving the absence of expected input from the environment, showing that depending on the type of experience the effects on development vary. Consequently, children exposed to threat present alterations in emotional development while children exposed to deprivation

manifest deficits in cognitive functioning. In this sense, recognizing that the consequences are determined by the type of abuse, it is necessary to advance in studies that allow the identification of the underlying mechanisms in the different forms of manifestation of abuse which will contribute in a greater clarity to define the most relevant intervention variables. In this regard, van IJzendoorn et al. (2019) propose that research on the background of child abuse deserves further development especially with regard to mediation models and the potentially divergent precursors in the different types of abuse.

Finally, with regard to the procedures for analyzing the information it is found that the results revolve around the p values and in some cases in effect size measures, however, no confidence intervals are established that would allow the results named as marginal or with a significant trend to be analyzed more clearly, an aspect that according to Ato et al. (2013) is a criticism that has been related to the research reports since approximately 1999. In addition, as Bardenes-Ribera and Frías (2017) point out incorrect interpretations regarding the p-value affect the understanding of the differences between statistical significance and clinical significance and the decisions regarding the practice derived from there; this fact is evident in most of the programs because, despite the fact that the results are not statistically significant, the qualitative evaluation that the participants make of them reveals an improvement in the difficulties they experience in the exercise of their motherhood.

Given the nature of this study, it should be noted that its main limitation is related as expressed by Melendez-Torres et al. (2019) for this type of analysis with the provisionality and openness of the data presented, that is, future research can deepen the results or develop them further since what it is about is to present the most effective interventions through the description of its components. In this sense, its impact is at the contextual level, that is, it

allows the adoption, development or elimination of components of interventions in practical or clinical settings, in order to enhance their impact, "this heterogeneity means that the scope of the benefit of the implementation of programs is uncertain" (Meléndez-Torres et al., 2019, p. 194), so the conclusions, although exhaustive, do not allow recommendations or decisions to be made for the exercise of public health procedures.

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