

DEVELOPMENTAL: HODGES & TIZARD EFFECTS OF PRIVATION

Aim: to investigate the effects of early privation on subsequent social and emotional development, and to test the maternal deprivation (or privation) hypothesis. The study aimed to follow the same children over a long period of time (longitudinal) to collect reliable information linking early experiences to later outcomes

Procedures:

- ❑ This longitudinal study was a natural experiment. The independent variable (attachment experiences) varied naturally. The participants were 65 children who had been placed in an institution when they were less than 4 months old. There was an explicit policy in the institution against caregivers forming attachments with the children. This would suggest that the children experienced early privation
- ❑ By the age of 4, 24 of the institutionalised children had been adopted, 15 had returned to their natural homes, and the rest remained in the institution
- ❑ Assessment at ages 8 and 16 involved interviewing those children who were adopted and those who had returned to their original homes. Their parents, their teachers and their peers were also interviewed. Data were also obtained about a control group of "normal" peers

Findings:

- ❑ There were some differences between the adopted and "restored" children. The adopted children generally had close attachments to their parents and good family relationships, whereas this was much less true for the restored children
- ❑ However, there were similarities in the behaviour of the adopted and restored children outside the family. For example, both groups were more likely to seek adult attention and approval than the control children and both groups were less successful in their peer relationships.

Conclusions:

- ❑ There is evidence that *does not* support the maternal deprivation hypothesis. The two ex[-institution groups, adopted and restored, differed within their family relationships. The restored children often returned to the same difficult circumstances that had precipitated the need for care in the first place, and to parents who may have felt ambivalent about them. In contrast, adopted children went to homes where the parents had very much wanted a child. This shows that recovery is possible given the right circumstances
- ❑ There is evidence which *does* support the maternal deprivation hypothesis. Outside the family environment it would appear that early privation did have an effect on subsequent social development. Clarke and Clarke (1979) put forward a transactional model to explain the findings. It may be that the adopted children in Hodges and Tizard's studies got on well within their families because the families made special efforts to love them, whereas they did not experience this outside the home and thus were unable to form relationships as easily or well

Criticisms:

- ❑ Random allocation of participants to experimental groups is used to ensure that the participant groups in an experiment are equivalent. In this study there may have been important differences between the two groups (adopted and restored) apart from the independent variable. It is possible that children selected for adoption were the more attractive and socially able/the child's temperament can be a confounding variable. This means we cannot infer a causal relationship
- ❑ Attrition is a common problem in longitudinal research. Inevitably, some participants are no longer available or willing to take part in the study as the years pass by. It is more likely that a certain kind of individual is more likely to drop out of a study e.g those who are less well adjusted. This leaves the study with a biased sample. If a study sample is biased, the researchers have to be very careful about what conclusions they can draw.