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Dipartimento di Storia, Società e Studi sull’Uomo, Università del Salento

## **Out of relational synch: associations between pathological personality traits and interpersonal coordination**

*Camilla Gregorini*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Psychology, University of Milan – Bicocca

### **Abstract**

Interpersonal coordination concerns the human ability to join social interactions with a successful degree of interconnection at behavioral, emotional, and cognitive level. Subjects in social interaction naturally lean toward adapting each other's behavior and reaching a certain degree of synchronization. Prior studies have shown that a good interpersonal synchronization seems typical of a “*hyper follower*” dynamic (i.e., both individuals tend to mutually adapt to each other) rather than a “*leader-follower*” one and this reciprocal influence creates positive effects improving social attachment, sense of affiliation, and feeling of inclusion. The aim of current research project is to explore the ability of synchronizing in a community sample and the association with their personality functioning. In order to obtain an objective measure of individual differences in synchronization ability, we set up a finger tapping task in which participants are asked to interact synchronizing their taps with the tones produced by the computer (“Virtual Partner”) that varies its adaptivity's range from low to high reproducing the human behavior. After computing the standard deviations of the asynchrony between the intertap intervals for each participant, we will test associations with different measures of personality pathology. We expect that people with pathological personality traits associated to cognitive bias, lack of mentalization, empathy, avoidance of social settings, dysfunctional perception of trust and cooperation, could perform with low level of interpersonal synchronization, perceive the other as less cooperative and evaluate their sense of “being in sync” as low even when the interactive partner is moderate or overly responsive.

The next step of the project consists in extending this results in clinical populations especially in participants affected by personality and mental disorders to explore how interpersonal impairments and misinterpretation of others' acting could negatively affect the ability to create a coupled behavioral dynamic and the perception of a sense of affiliation and social connection.

This project is part of an ongoing collaboration with Dr. Ivana Konvalinka from the Department of Applied Mathematics and Computer Science - Technical University of Denmark (DTU).

## **Enhancing quality of parenting in mothers with substance use disorder: proposal for a randomized controlled trial to test the effect of the Video-feedback Intervention to promote Positive Parenting and Sensitive Discipline (VIPP-SD)**

*Alessio Porreca*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Dipartimento di Psicologia dello Sviluppo e della Socializzazione – Università degli Studi di Padova

### **Abstract**

Maternal Substance Use Disorder (SUD) is widely recognized as a high-risk condition for parenting and child development. National and international studies agree on the need to identify parenting interventions that are effective for this population and to better understand mechanisms involved in the process of change. The present contribution presents the proposal of a randomized wait-list controlled trial aimed at examining the efficacy of the Video-feedback Intervention to promote Positive Parenting and Sensitive Discipline (VIPP-SD ; Juffer et al., 2008), an evidence-based parenting intervention, in improving quality of parenting in mothers with SUD (Objective 1). Moreover, the project aims to test whether parental cognitive mechanisms mediate the effect of the VIPP-SD on quality of parenting (Objective 2).

The study will involve mothers with SUD and low-risk mothers of toddlers and preschool children. Mothers with SUD will be randomly divided in two groups, one receiving the intervention and one undergoing treatment as usual. All the mothers will be assessed pre-test and post-test with respect to quality of parenting (observational measures) and parental cognitive mechanisms (neuropsychological tasks and self-report measures).

The results of the study will provide important scientific and clinical insights. Specifically, they will highlight whether the VIPP-SD, that has been previously found effective in other at-risk samples, is also effective in the context of SUD. Moreover, they will shed light on the potential cognitive mechanisms involved in the process of change.

The trial will be carried out through a network of national and international collaborations involving the following institutions: University of Padua, Erasmus University Rotterdam, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, and University of Pavia. Currently, the project is not financed by other national or international funds.

## Adaptation of a web-based program to increase psychological flexibility in youth with Type I Diabetes

*Giulia Landi*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Laboratory of Psychosomatics and Clinimetrics, Department of Psychology “Renzo Canestrari”, University of Bologna

### Abstract

Type 1 Diabetes (T1D) affects over 1.1 million youth worldwide. It is a chronic condition with demanding treatment regime that places substantial psychological, physical, and social stress on youth. Most psychological interventions for youth with T1D have focused on reducing distress, rather than enhancing resilience and related protective factors. One promising intervention that has been shown to promote mental health and resilience in youth is an online preventive program called You Only Live Once (YOLO). It is based on Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), whose transdiagnostic approach aims to increase psychological flexibility (PF). PF is defined as behaving consistently with one’s chosen values even in the presence of unwanted intrusive internal experiences such as emotional discomfort or self-critical thinking and is the cornerstone of psychological health. This project aims to evaluate the efficacy of the YOLO Program for youth with T1D. The YOLO Program has been translated and adapted in Italian thanks to a collaboration with Prof. Kenneth Pakenham, University of Queensland (AU) who will be also involved in this project. We hypothesize that participation to the YOLO Program, compared to a waitlist control (WLC), will promote the following positive changes: (1) significant increase in PF; (2) improvement in diabetes distress, depression and anxiety; (3) increase in quality of life. 100 youth with T1D aged 18–24 will be recruited at the Sant’Orsola hospital in Bologna. Participants will be randomly assigned to the treatment or the WLC group and directed to complete the online pre-intervention assessment. Assessments will be also conducted at post-intervention and 12-week follow-up. Changes across the two groups will be assessed using repeated measures mixed ANOVAs with one between-subjects factor (group) and one within-subjects factor (time). This project will innovatively deliver an online preventive intervention targeting the welfare of youth with T1D.



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