

Interpersonal Reactivity: The Impact of Infant-Juvenile Positive Experiences

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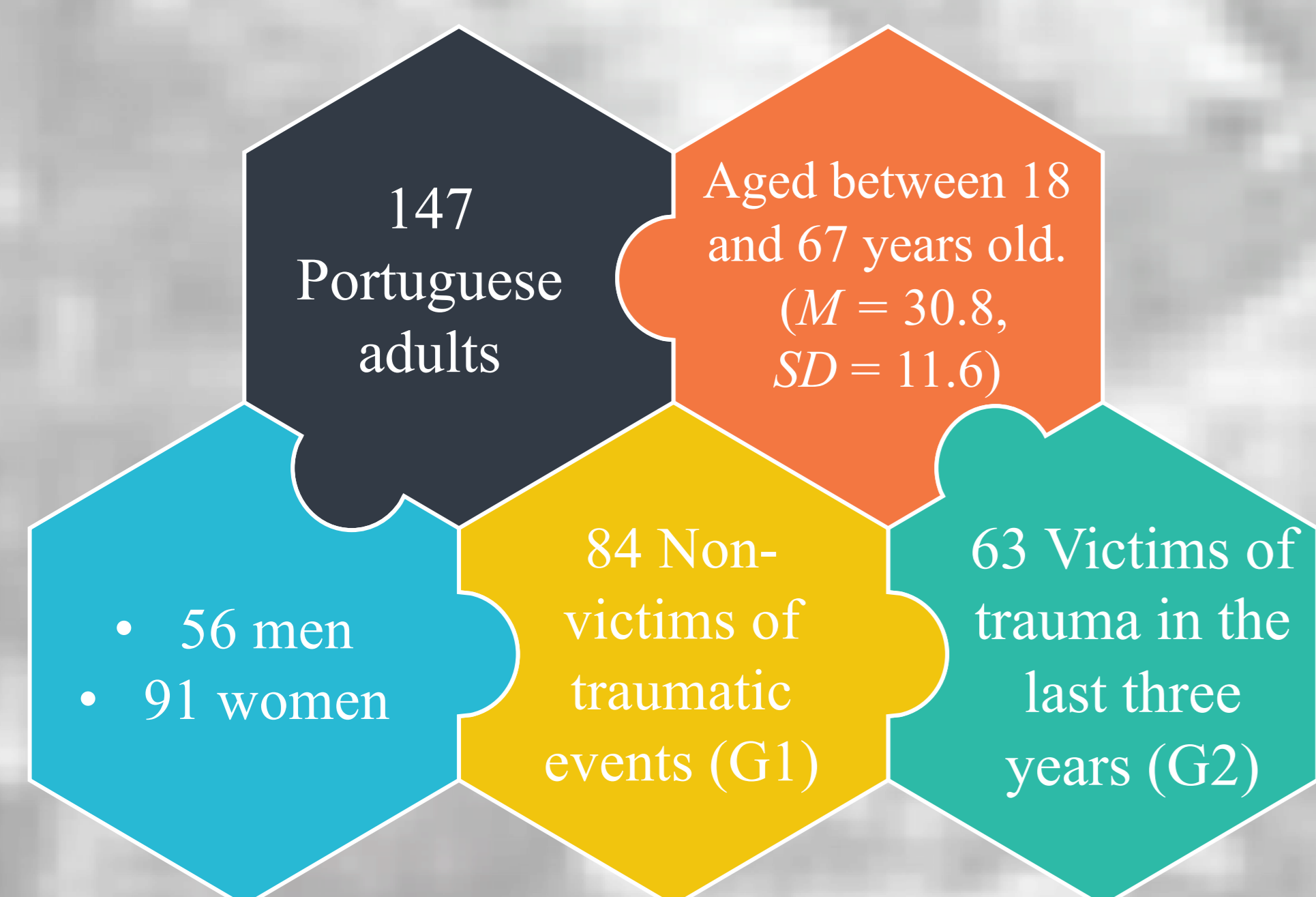
Introduction

- Children's exposure to negative and positive experiences has consequences throughout their lifetime [1]. Positive experiences are associated with how the child sees and interacts with their world [2], and it helps to develop mitigating factors for the adverse effects of adverse experiences and promoters of resilience [3].
- Interpersonal reactivity/Empathy has three dimensions: cognitive, motor, and affective. The cognitive dimension assesses to the perspective taking (which is the tendency to take the point of view of others), and to the fantasy (which is the identification of the individual himself with fictional characters). The motor dimension is the individual's motor response to others. In the affective dimension there are the empathic concern (the recognition of the feelings that are directed to others, and the motivation to help people), and the personal distress (the tendency of an individual to feel pain or discomfort before the suffering of others) [4].
- The objectives of this research are to study the relationship between interpersonal reactivity (empathy) and positive experiences in childhood and to compare victims and non-victims of traumatic events.

Materials and Methods

Instruments

Participants



Interpersonal Reactivity Index– IRI [5]

An instrument that measures empathy,
24 items,
Four dimensions: Perspective Taking, Fantasy,
Empathic Concern and Personal Distress.

Benevolent Childhood Experiences – BCEs [6]

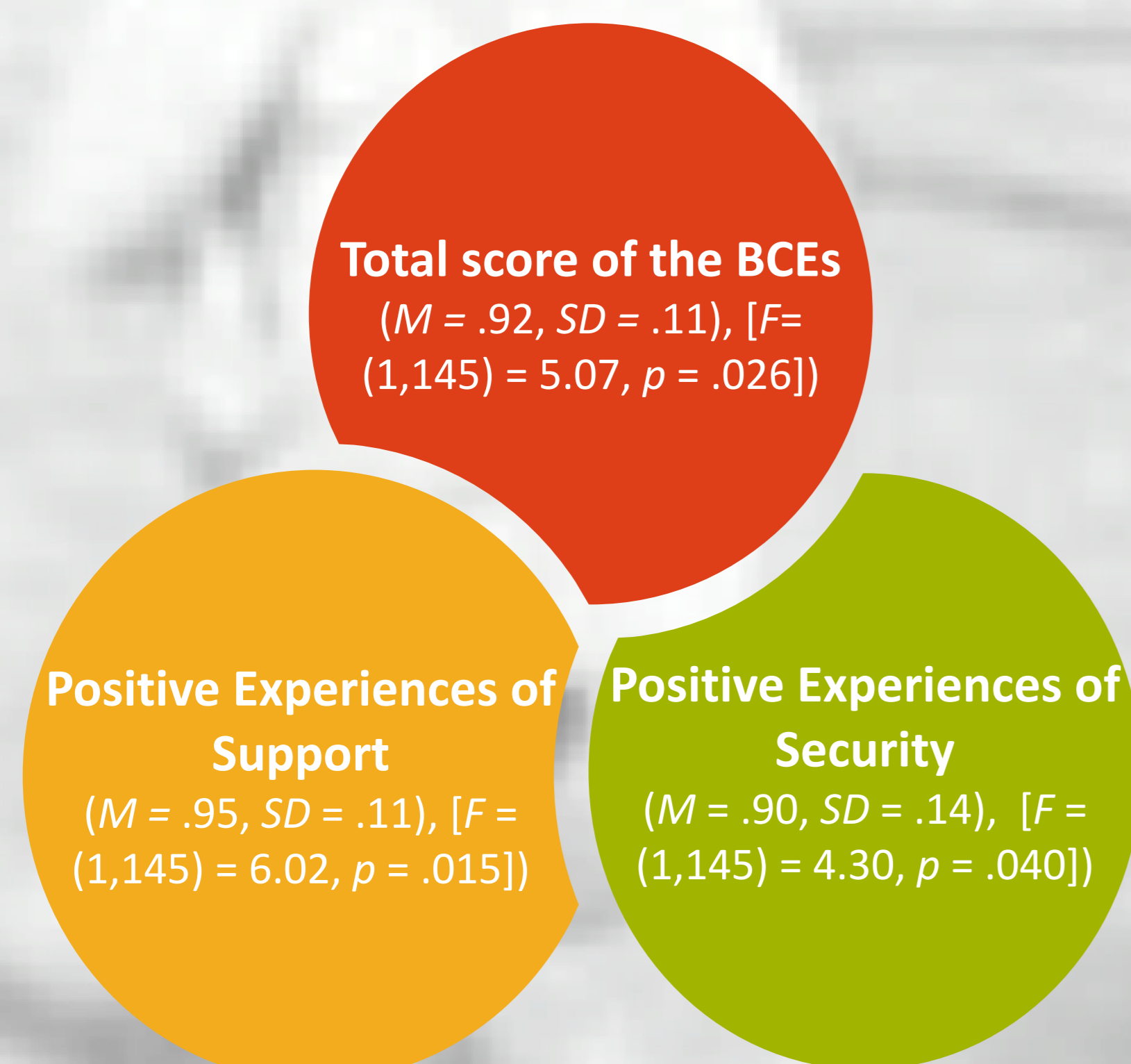
An instrument that assesses to positive experiences of early life in adults,
10 items,
Three dimensions: Perceived relational and internal safety and security, Positive and predictable quality of life and Interpersonal support.

Procedure

Participants answered online to a sociodemographic questionnaire, the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI) [5], and the Benevolent Childhood Experiences (BCEs) scale [6].

Results

Concerning the experience of traumatic events in adulthood, the results revealed statistically significant differences. Compared to G2, the G1, have higher scores of:



Correlations between EEBI and IRI with Cramer's V ($n = 147$):

- Data showed statistically significant correlations between:

Interpersonal Support and the Perspective Taking

($V = .402$; $p = .035$)

Interpersonal Support and Empathic Concern

($V = .371$; $p = .038$)

Perceived Relational and Internal Safety and Security, and Fantasy

($V = .438$; $p = .035$)

Total score of the BCEs and the subscale Fantasy in the IRI

($V = .421$; $p = .036$)

Discussion and Conclusions:

Our data showed statistically significant correlations between Interpersonal Support and the Perspective Taking, Interpersonal Support and Empathic Concern, the Perceived Relational and Internal Safety and Security, and Fantasy, the total score of the BCEs and the subscale Fantasy in the IRI.

This research points to an association between the existence of positive experiences in the infant-juvenile phase and the development of empathy in adulthood. Some studies corroborate our results, demonstrating that the experiences in the first stages of life will have long-term repercussions on their social-emotional development [3].

Since empathy and positive experiences interfere in child development, that's important to promote, reinforce and safeguard these experiences throughout the stages of the life cycle.

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