

# Posttraumatic Stress and Depression Symptom Classes in Parents of Trauma-Exposed Children:

## A Transdiagnostic Perspective using Pooled Individual Participant Data

Sadeh, Y.<sup>1</sup>, Graham, L.<sup>1</sup>, Curtis, M.<sup>2</sup>, Janson, M.<sup>3</sup>, Kim, J.<sup>4</sup>, Schwartz, A.<sup>5, 6</sup>, Undset, A.<sup>7</sup>, Denejkina, A. <sup>8</sup>

### Intro

- In the aftermath of child trauma, post-traumatic stress (PTS) and depression symptoms often co-occur among trauma exposed children and their parents.
- Studies have used latent class analysis (LCA) to examine PTS and depression symptoms and identify homogeneous subgroups among trauma exposed children. However, little is known about subgroups or classes of PTS and depression reactions of parents of traumatized children.
- **The Hierarchical Taxonomy of Psychopathology (HiTOP)** is a model where symptoms are conceptualized within a hierarchical structure, rather than as taxonomies of psychiatric disorders. This model provides a useful framework for investigation of symptom classes of disorders that tend to co-occur.

The aims of the present study were to:

1. Investigate classes of internalizing symptoms in parents following their child’s traumatic event
2. Examine potential sociodemographic predictors of these classes

### Methods

- Data for this study were obtained from the **Prospective Studies of Acute Child Trauma and Recovery (PACT/R) data archive** (Kassam-Adams et al., 2020). The PACT/R archive includes individual participant-level data from 30 prospective studies of children after acute trauma exposure.
- For the current analyses, we used harmonized individual participant data (n=702) from eight studies (Australia, UK, US), which included at least one assessment of parent/caregiver PTS and depression symptoms that had been assessed two to nine months (60 to 269 days) after their child’s traumatic event.
- Symptom classes were identified using latent class analysis (LCA). LCA is a person-centered method, that can be used to identify sub-groups within the population that share heterogenous characteristics.

### Results

Three classes were identified:

- 1) Low Internalizing Symptoms (n =508, 72%)
- 2) Low PTS High Depression (n = 118, 17%)
- 3) High Internalizing Symptoms (n = 76, 11%)

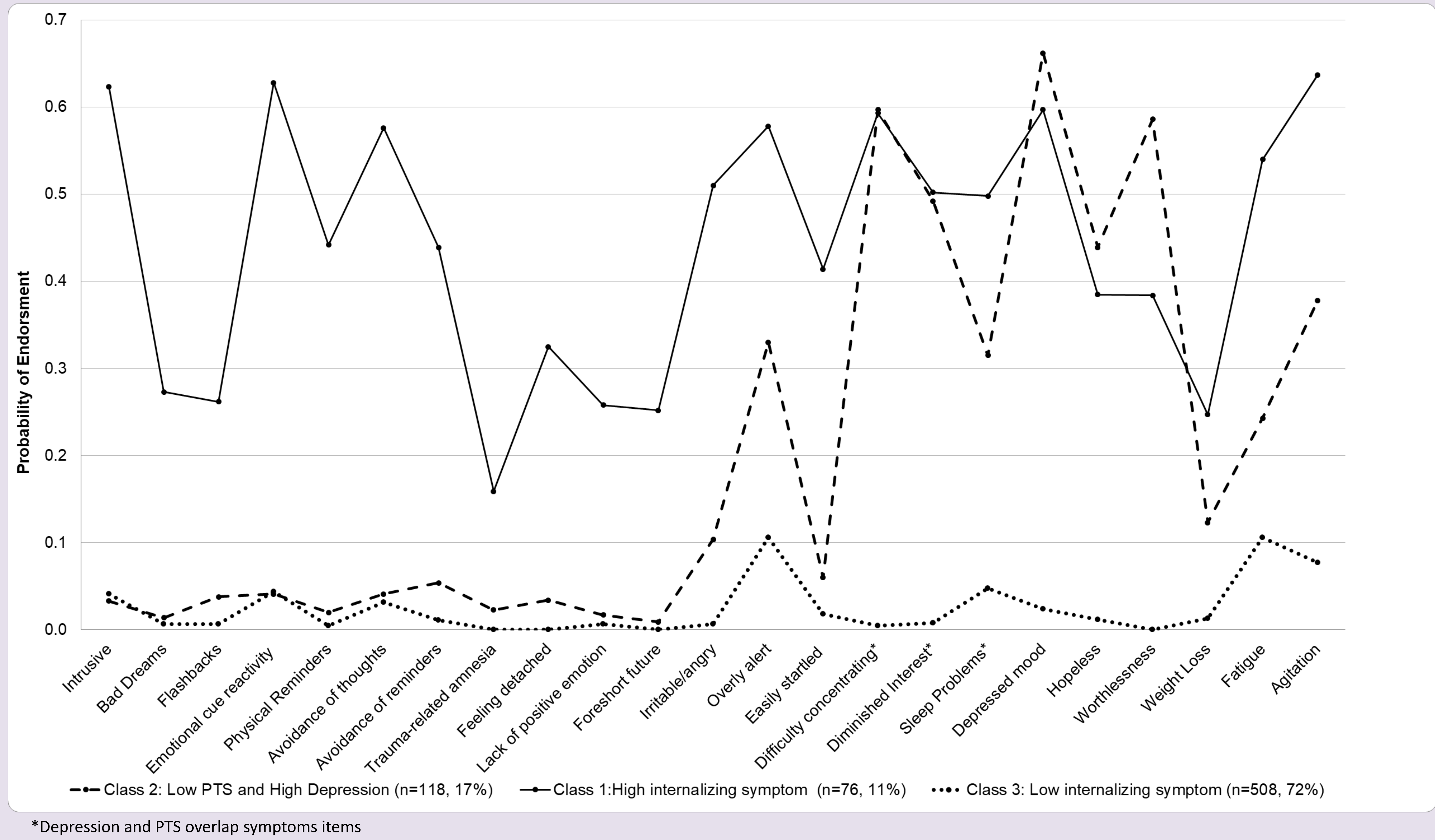
Parents in the *Low PTS High Depression* and *High Internalizing Symptoms* symptom classes were more likely to be mothers, have children of older age and be of an ethnic minority.

### Discussion

- The aim of this study was to examine heterogeneity in internalizing symptom classes among parents/caregivers of children following a traumatic event for their child.
- **We took a cross-diagnostic perspective (HiTOP model), considering symptoms within both PTS and depression as currently defined by common diagnostic systems.**
- For the second aim of this study, predictors of class membership identified in this study **echo the broader framework of social determinants of mental health research**, including gender and ethnic minority status in country of residence impacting mental health outcomes.
- These findings bear valuable clinical implications, highlighting that the same intervention strategies could be utilized for parents to address PTS and depression symptoms, and special considerations must be given for mothers and people from minority cultural/ethnic backgrounds.

Three symptom classes were identified:

- 1) Low internalizing symptom class
- 2) Low PTS high depression symptom class
- 3) High internalizing symptom class



<sup>1</sup>The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA

<sup>2</sup>Rollins School of Public Health, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia, USA

<sup>3</sup>University of California, Santa Barbara, California, USA

<sup>4</sup>Soro Orot Institute, Inc. (Soro Orot Institute-Counselor Group for Counseling and Education of Multicultural and Social Justice Issues), Seoul, Korea

<sup>5</sup>Bordeaux Population Health Research Center, University of Bordeaux, Bordeaux, France

<sup>6</sup>Department of Public Health, University of Tennessee-Knoxville, Knoxville, Tennessee, USA

<sup>7</sup>Norwegian Centre for Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies, Oslo, Norway

<sup>8</sup>Translational Health Research Institute; Young and Resilient Research Centre; Graduate Research School-Western Sydney University, Sydney, Australia

For more information  
and data available for  
secondary analysis visit the  
Child Trauma Data Archives  
[www.childtraumadata.org](http://www.childtraumadata.org)

