



Comparing Parent's Emotional Distress and Negative Expectations in Clinical and Subclinical Symptom Groups of Sexually Abused Children



Authors: Emily Sonnen, Brittany Biles, Katie Meidlinger, Kate Theimer, Kelsey McCoy, T. Zachary Huit, Akemi Mii, Hannah Coffey, Mary Fran Flood, & David J. Hansen



Presenters: Emily Sonnen, M.A., & Brittany Biles, M.A.

INTRO

- Non-offending parents of youth who have who have experienced **child sexual abuse (CSA)** can be “**secondary victims,**” suffering emotional distress after their child’s disclosure.
- When distressed, parents may **have worse expectations** about their child’s future and be less emotionally supportive, which can impact children’s recovery.
- Thus, it is necessary to **identify factors related to parent symptoms** following a child’s disclosure.
- The **study’s purpose** is to examine how parent emotional distress and negative expectations relate to **clinical and subclinical symptom groups** of CSA victims.

METHOD

- **Participants:** 295 non-offending parents and their 295 children (M = 12.5 years, range 7-17 years, 50% female, 50% male, 73% European American), a 12-week cognitive behavioral group intervention at a Child Advocacy Center.
- **Parents:** Ages 23-72 (M = 38), 76% female, 73% European American.
- **Victims:** Ages 7-17 (M = 12), 73% female, 64% European American.
- **Clinical and subclinical child symptom groups** created by averaging internalizing and externalizing problem *t*-scores on the Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL).
- **Parent Expectations** were measured using the Post Sexual Abuse Expectations Scale (PSAES).
- **Parent emotional distress** was measured using average anxiety and depression *t*-scores from the Symptom Checklist-90-R (SCL-90-R).
- **Independent samples t-tests** were used to compare parent symptoms across groups of clinical and subclinical child symptoms.

Parents report more emotional distress and poorer expectations about their child’s future if their child has clinically elevated symptoms following sexual abuse.

ADDITIONAL INFO

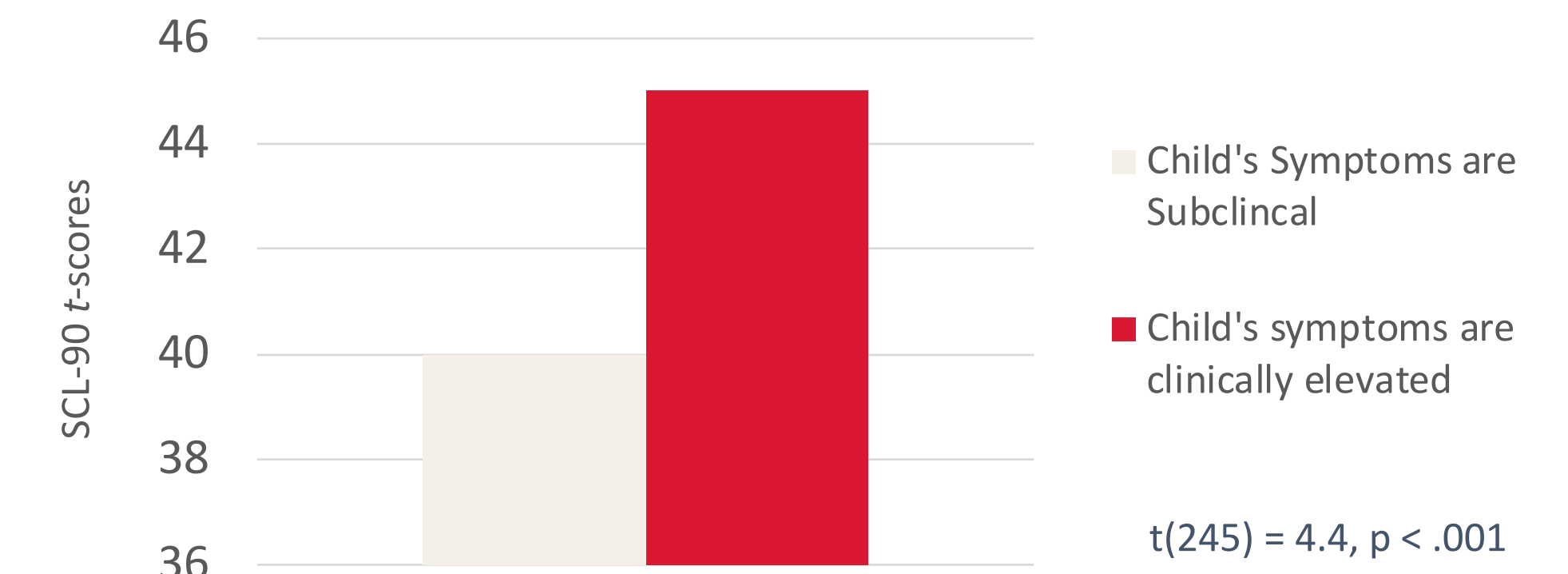
Scan QR Code to access more detailed results, implications, and references.

Scan Me!

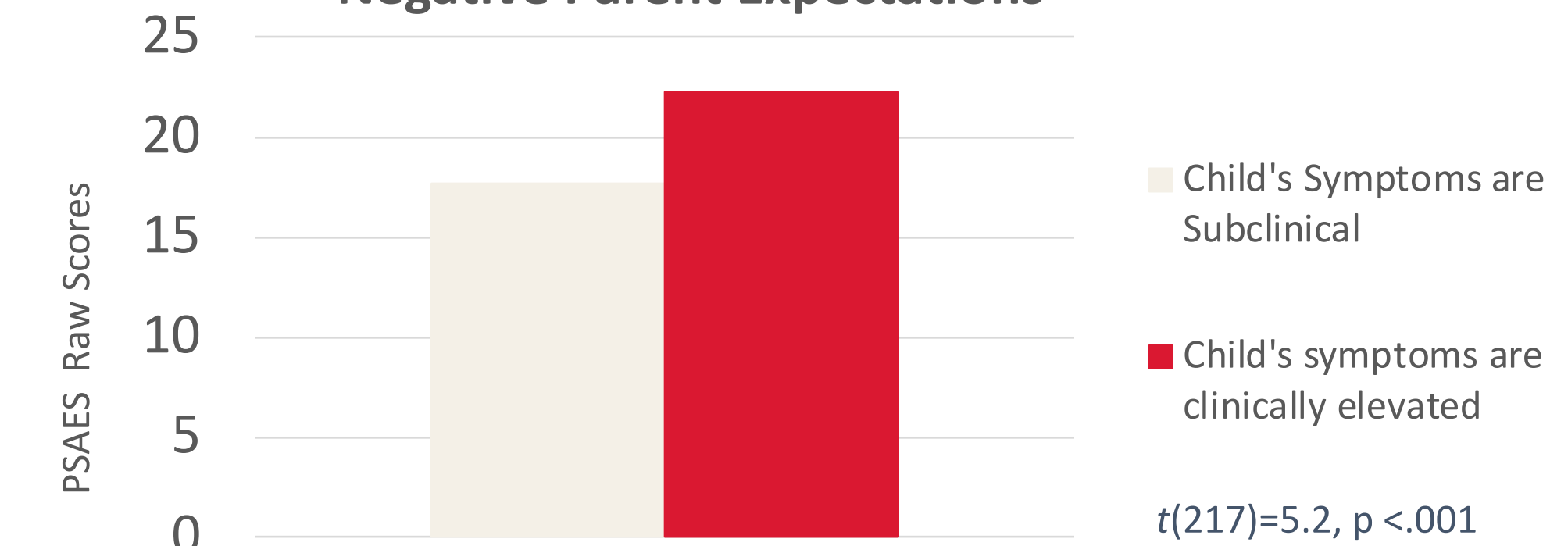


RESULTS

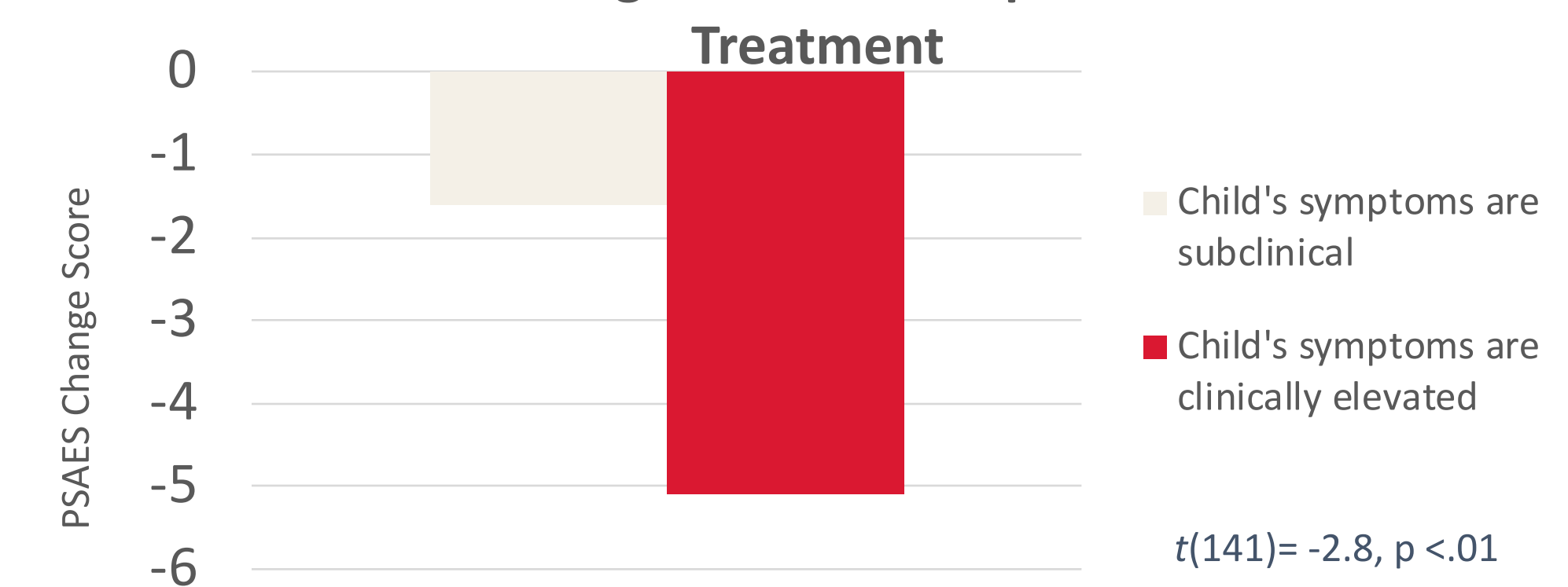
Parent Emotional Distress



Negative Parent Expectations



Reductions in Negative Parent Expectations Across Treatment



DISCUSSION

- **Parents’ emotional state and expectations** are linked to their **child’s symptom severity** following CSA.
- There may be important differences in **parents’ presentation to treatment and amenability to change** maladaptive emotions and views, and these are connected to child symptom presentation.
- Though **most parents benefitted from treatment**, results show the **added importance of treating parents** of CSA victims with elevated symptoms.
- **Future interventions** should increase efforts to reach underserved CSA parent populations.