

Deficits in social cognition as etiopathogenetic factor for MDD

The Theory of Mind (ToM)-model of depression

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Introduction

- Patients suffering from MDD exhibit impairments in social-cognitive abilities such as ToM¹
- Major ToM milestones occur in the first decade of life²
- Significant increases in MDD prevalence observed in early adolescence³
- **Deficiency in ToM as an etiopathogenetic factor in MDD⁴ (fig.1)?**

ToM deficits in MDD patients

- MDD patients exhibit a moderate decoding and reasoning deficit in social-cognitive demanding situations⁵
- ToM deficiency may remain in remitted patients and affects MDD's severity and course⁶
- ToM deficiency can be modulate by mood induction⁵
- Inconsistencies: no decoding, but reasoning deficits in MDD?

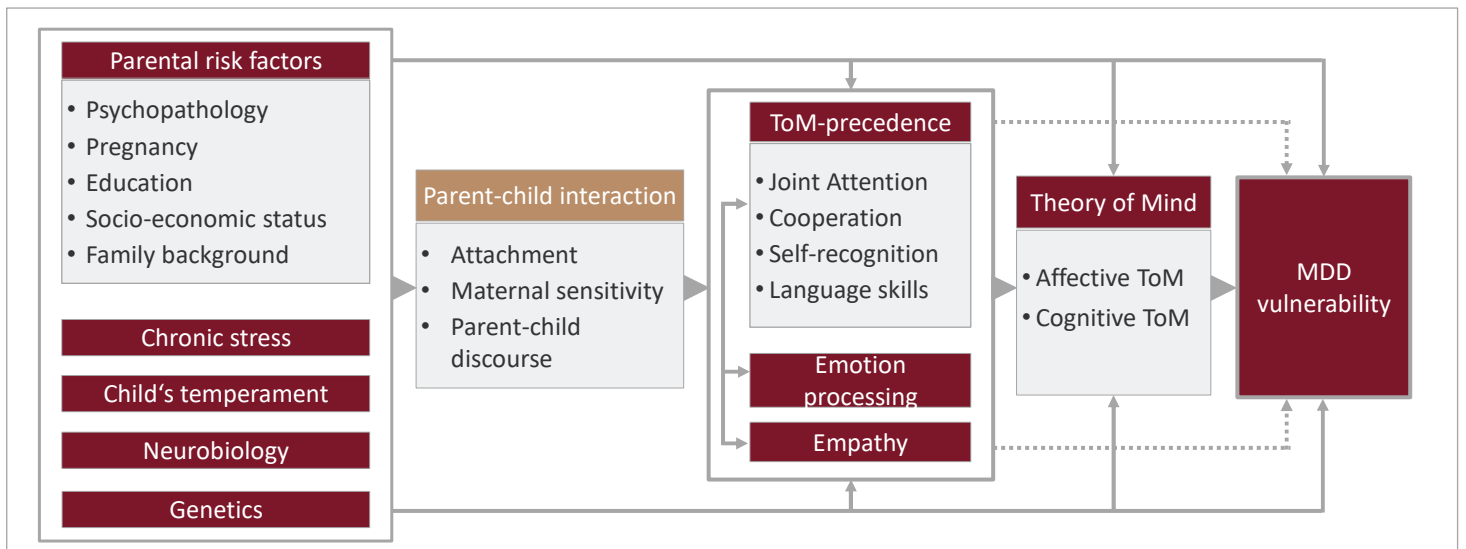


fig. 1. ToM model of depression.

Interplay of social and biological factors

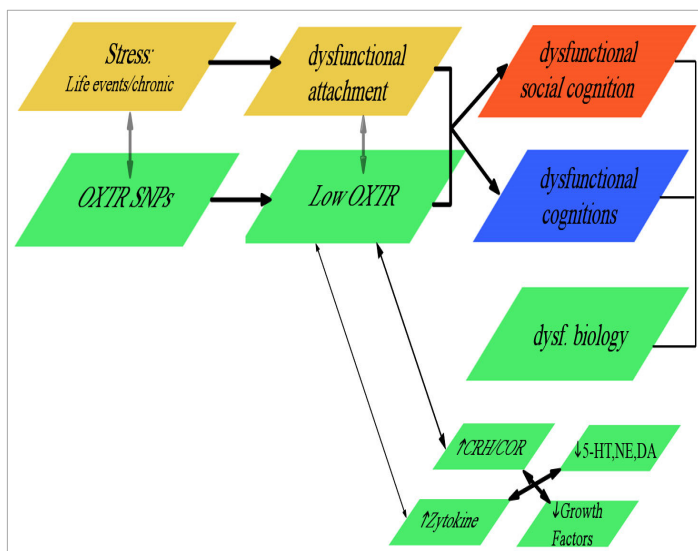


fig. 2 Interplay between stress, attachment and biological factors in the development of social-cognitive deficits in MDD. Model based on McQuaid, 2014.

Implications of the ToM-model of depression

- Considers MDD as developmental psychopathological disorder
- Emphasizes bio-psycho-social MDD research
- ToM deficiency: etiological factor or MDD symptom?
- **Social Cognition in Adolescents with Depression (SAD)-youth study first multicenter study covering the subject (fig. 3)**

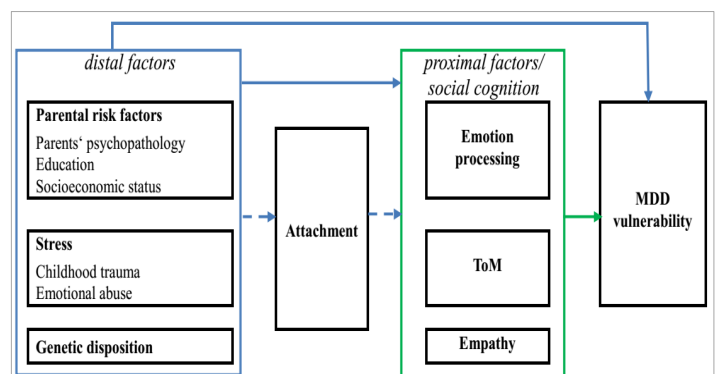


fig. 3. Study model of the SAD-youth study.

References

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