The Family Alliance Assessment Scales (FAAS) :
A tool to assess family interactions.

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Background and aims

During the last 30 years, research showed that interactions between parents and their child has a great influence on the child's development (McHale & Rasmussen, 1998). However, whereas observational tools for assessment of dyadic parent-infant interactions have been available for decades, such tools for family-level interactions are still scarce, even though this level explains specific processes in child's development (Lauretti & McHale, 1997).

This poster aims at presenting the Family Alliance Assessment Scale (FAAS), an instrument designed to assess father-mother-infant interactions, and the first steps of its validation.

Method

45 families (SES middle to high) were observed during a 4-parts play situation, the *Lausanne Trilogue Play* (LTP; Fivaz-Depeursinge & Corboz-Warnery, 1999).

The 45 families came from 3 different samples: one non referred (normative sample; n=15), one referred for medically assisted procreation (infertility sample; n=15) and one referred for a psychiatric condition in one parent (clinical sample; n=15). Every LTP was assessed with the FAAS.

In order to test the validity of our tool through known-group validity, FAAS scores of the normative vs referred samples were compared with one-way ANOVAs and Bonferroni post-hoc tests.

In order to check concurrent validity, 30 couples (15 *normative* and 15 *infertility*) were asked to fill in a DAS (Dyadic Adjustment Scale; Spanier, 1976), a self-report questionnaire used to assess marital satisfaction.

The FAAS

To assess the family alliance, defined as the degree of coordination partners reach in working together towards implementing a task (Fivaz-Depeursinge & Corboz-Warnery, 1999), the FAAS describes 11 interactive scales, which are mainly based on the observation of non verbal behaviors of the three members of the family:

(1) postures and gazes; (2) inclusion of partners; (3) role implication; (4) structure of the task; (5) co-construction; (6) parental scaffolding; (7) family warmth; (8) validation of the infant's experience; (9) authenticity of affects; (10) interactive mistakes and their resolutions during play; and finally (11) interactive mistakes and their resolutions during transitions.

Results and discussion

1) The *interrater reliability* between 3 coders: *Intraclass Correlation Coefficient* varies from .60 to .76.

2) The *One-way ANOVAs* computed to test the validity of the FAAS through *known-group validity* reported significant results on the 11 interactive scales. The $F_{(2,42)}$ values vary from 3.665 to 15.893. *Bonferroni post-hoc tests:* normative sample > Infertility sample > clinical sample (see table 1).

3) Results for *concurrent validity* are presented in table 2. The *Pearson's correlation coefficients* between FAAS total scores and DAS scores are negative (p<.05).

4) **Discussion**

- Results found in this study for interrater reliability and known-group validity seem to confirm the validity of our tool.

- Regarding results for concurrent validity, it first appears surprising. It could be explained by the fact that parents that are very satisfied with their couple may have more difficulties to include a new element in their family system (meaning the baby).
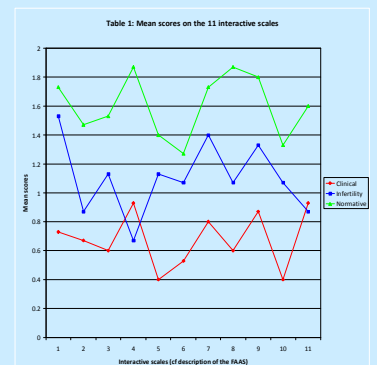

Table 1: Mean scores on the 11 interactive scales

Table 2	DAS scores	
	prenatal	postnatal
FAAS scores	-.374*	-.401*

Pearson's coefficients. *p<.05.

References

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