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Three self-report questionnaires of the early mother-to-infant bond: reliability and validity of the Dutch version of the MPAS, PBQ and MIBS.

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In this study, we investigated the reliability and validity of three self-report questionnaires measuring the early emotional bond between a mother and her newborn infant: the Maternal Postpartum Attachment Scale (MPAS), the Postpartum Bonding Questionnaire (PBQ) and the Mother-to-Infant Bonding Scale (MIBS). In a monocentric prospective observational cohort study, 263 mothers completed the MPAS, the PBQ and the MIBS at 8-12 and at 20-25 weeks postpartum. The participants also completed measures of mental health and, during their pregnancy, measures of recalled parental bonding, adult romantic attachment, antenatal attachment and social desirability. In our study, the internal reliabilities of the PBQ and the MPAS were high at 8-12 weeks postpartum but dropped significantly at 20-25 weeks postpartum. Moderately strong correlations between the scales of the PBQ, the MPAS and the MIBS supported their construct validity. Further, weak correlations were found with social desirability and adult attachment representations, whereas moderate correlations were found with antenatal feelings of attachment and antenatal attitudes to motherhood. Finally, maternal feelings of bonding were also moderately associated with maternal mood. Overall, our findings suggest that the MPAS, the PBQ and the MIBS provide a reliable and valid indication of the early emotional tie between a woman and her newborn infant.

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