



IACAPAP 2018

23rd WORLD CONGRESS OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION
FOR CHILD AND ADOLESCENT PSYCHIATRY AND ALLIED PROFESSIONS



Child and adolescent psychiatry through the lens of infant psychiatry

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Continuity and discontinuity from infancy to adolescence is still a major issue in pediatric psychiatry. The major difference between the developmental psychopathology viewpoint and the traditional perspective of psychiatry is its conceptualization of mental disorder not as an inherent trait that resides in an individual but as something that emerges from the dynamic interplay between intra-individual and extra-individual contexts. The parent-infant relationship is one of these contexts where the infant's own biological protective and risk factors are in a complex interplay with the parent's biological and psychological strengths and weaknesses. In this lecture, we suggest to look at maladaptive behaviors in childhood and adolescence through the lens of this interplay, and we will end with an illustrative vignette.