

## **At risk pregnancy and the maternal image. Clinical examples**

*Maria Garro<sup>1</sup>, Aluette Merenda<sup>2</sup>*

Recent studies have concentrated their attention on the precocious child-parent relationship, and have deemed its “predictability” as regards the shaping of the subsequent experiences, to be significant and have monitored the development of this “predictability” over a period of time. On the basis of these assumptions, a systematic investigation was launched into parental image, and more generally into its cognitive-affective aspects, with regard to at-risk pregnancy experience; the influence of the pregnancy provoked trauma was highlighted specifically during the process of building up the maternal image, in connection with the birth and development of the parent-child relationship (Bowlby, Sandler, Rosenblatt, 1987).

The research set itself the aim of studying the various aspects of the maternal image, with reference to the correlation between: the pregnancy experience, mode of attachment, parental style and skills in expectant mothers enduring a pregnancy with the possibility of pathological indications. The methodological procedure envisaged a clinical interview and programming aid on women in their seventh month of pregnancy, who would be chosen on the basis of the following criteria: presence of pregnancy-and/or psychiatric pathology; a primipara state; sixth or seventh month of pregnancy.

In order to carry out the research two tools were used: a semi-structured interview and a graphic-symbolic technique, with the aim of building up a profile of the image that the future mother has of herself, of her child, of her partner, all on the basis of her own personal history and of significant experiences during the course of her life.

The revelation of an organic disease or of an anomaly in the foetus, either when they actually exist or there exists the potential risk, determines a significant maternal involvement, on both social and affective levels. Moreover, analysis of the precocious relationship in so-called “at risk” situations, assumes a significant role for the structuring and refining, on the part of health workers, of adequate operational projects, which constitute a satisfactory form of prevention, above all in those cases where the subjects involved are in close contact with pain and threat of death.

<sup>1</sup>*Assegnista di ricerca, Dipartimento di Psicologia di Palermo*

<sup>2</sup>*Psicologa*

La ricerca è stata condotta nell'ambito dell'attività scientifica coordinata dalla Prof.ssa Angela Maria Di Vita, Cattedra di Psicodinamica dello Sviluppo e delle Relazioni familiari, Università degli Studi di Palermo

E-mail: [divita@unipa.it](mailto:divita@unipa.it)