



HARVESTING THE POTENTIAL OF PERINATAL MENTAL HEALTH KNOWLEDGE:  
NEW DATA ABOUT FATHERS

THE FATHER'S EMOTIONAL INVOLVEMENT WITH THE NEONATE:  
THE IMPACT OF CHILDBIRTH EXPERIENCE

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- Emotional Involvement with Neonate (Klaus & Kennel, 1976) has been under research with the aim at improving perinatal care routines and reducing the incidence of parenting disorders (Knoester & Eggbeen, 2006)
- Childbirth experience influences father's emotional involvement with the neonate (Johnson, 2002; Waldenström, 1999)
- Participation in childbirth offers an opportunity for both father and mother to share parenthood experience (Pestvenidze & Bohrer, 2007; Vehvilainen-Julkunen & Liukkonen, 1998)

- Giving the father the opportunity to cut the umbilical cord of his child is a midwife's routine procedure, aiming at promoting the father's emotional involvement with the neonate
- However, little is known about this midwife's practice and its influence in the father's emotional involvement with the neonate

1. To assess the father's emotional involvement with the neonate
2. To explore the impact of the umbilical cord cutting experience on the father's emotional involvement with the neonate

105 fathers randomly recruited at the Porto Medical Center (Centro Hospitalar do Porto – Unidade Maternidade Júlio Dinis) delivery room in Portugal between January and May 2008

The sample was selected by a random sampling process with the following exclusion criteria:

- Multiple pregnancy
- Pre-term pregnancy
- Instrumented deliveries or caesarean sections
- Neonates who were hospitalized in an intensive care unit after birth

## SAMPLE

		<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Age</b> (years)	≤18	6	5.7
	≥18	99	94.3
<b>Marital Status</b>	Single	11	10.4
	Married	69	65.7
	Co-habitation	24	22.9
	Divorced	1	1.0
<b>Education</b> (years of school)	<9 years	22	21.0
	≥ 9 and ≤12 years	58	55.2
	Graduate	21	20.0
	Post-Graduate	4	3.8
<b>Occupational Status</b>	Employed	100	95.2
	Unemployed	5	4.8

- Socio-demographic questionnaire
- Bonding Scale (Figueiredo et al., 2009)
  - Validated and extended Portuguese version of the “New mother-to-Infant Bonding Scale” (Taylor et al., 2005)
  - Self-report questionnaire composed by 12 items in a liker scale from 0 to 3, according to the emotion intensity towards the neonate (“very much”, “a lot”, “a little” or “not at all”)
  - Internal consistency (Cronbach alpha= 0.71) and of test-retest reliability (Spearman correlation= 0.49,  $p < 0.01$ )



## Before Childbirth

- Socio-Demographic Questionnaire
- Bonding Scale



## First day after childbirth

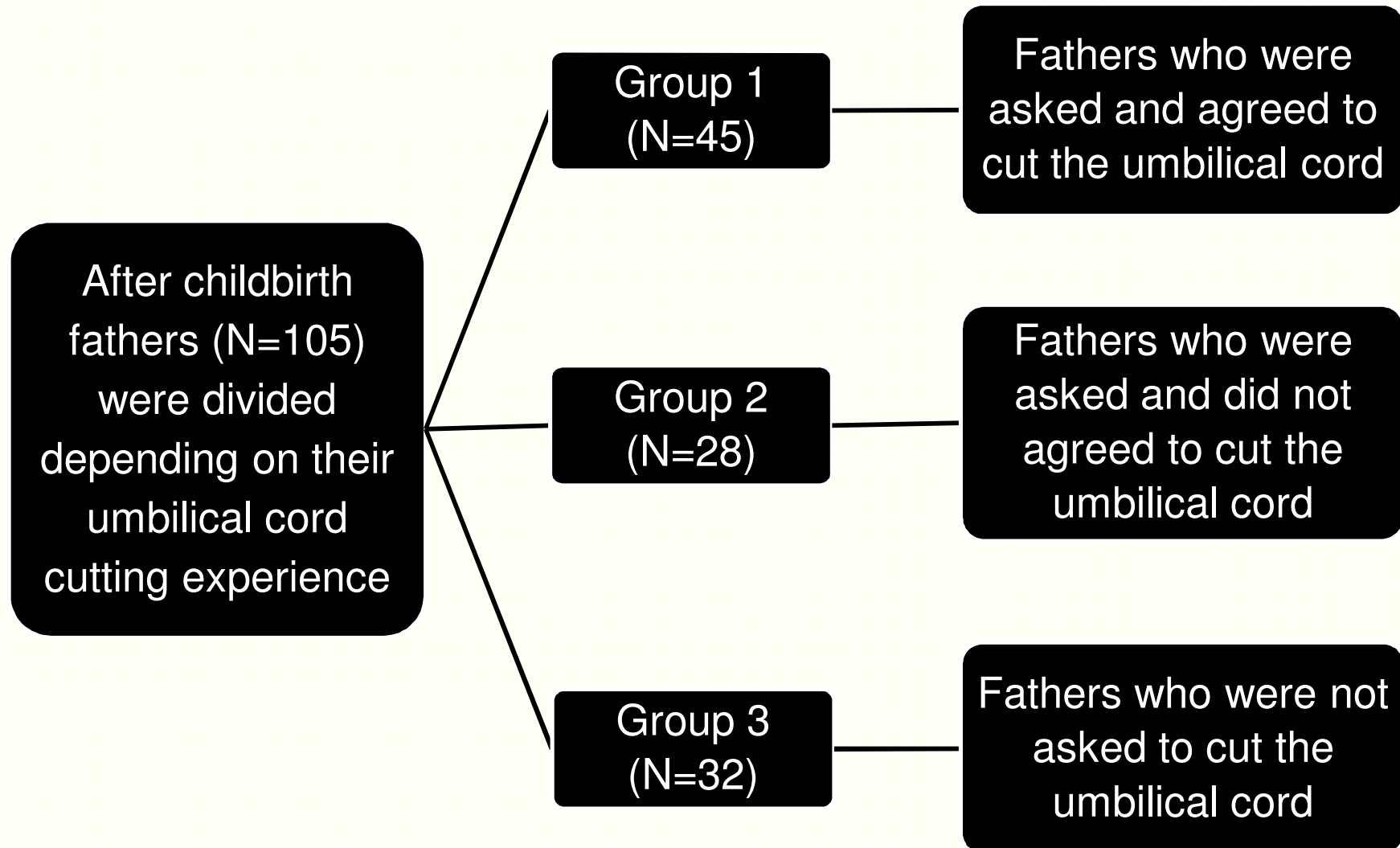
- Bonding Scale



## First month after childbirth

- Bonding Scale

## PROCEDURES

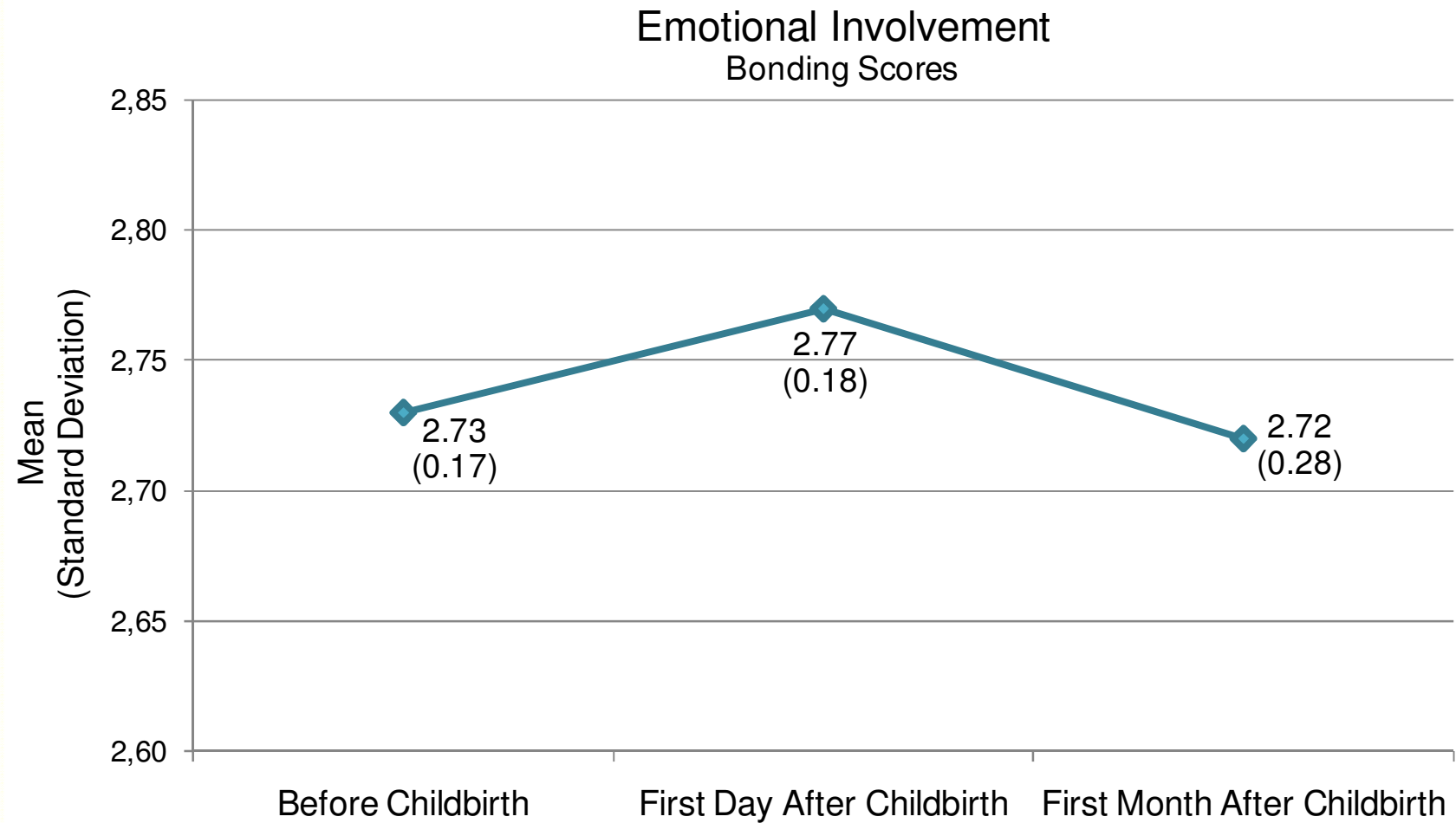


- No significant differences were found in the groups concerning Socio-demographic characteristics
- Significant differences were found regarding neonate characteristics

As the neonate's gender factor presented statistic significant results, this variable was controlled in the analysis

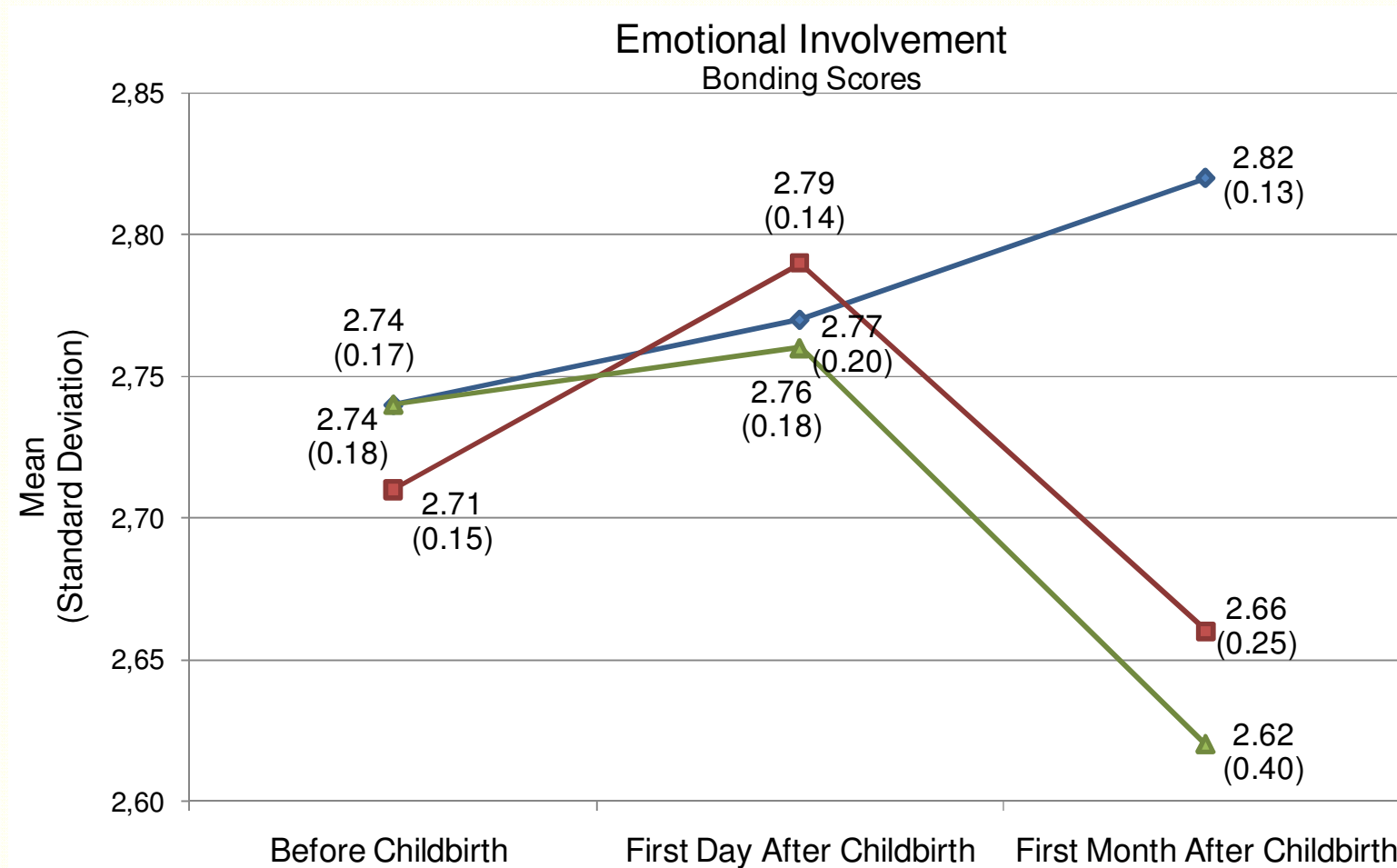
# RESULTS

Aim 1 – To assess the father's emotional involvement with the neonate



# RESULTS

Aim 2 – To explore the impact of the umbilical cord cutting experience on the father's emotional involvement with the neonate



- The father's emotional involvement with the neonate:
  - increases from before childbirth to the first day after childbirth
  - and decreases between the first day after childbirth and the first month after childbirth
  
- However, in the group of fathers to whom was provided and who agreed to cut the umbilical cord it was observed an improvement of the emotional involvement with the neonate one month after childbirth

Brandão, S. & Figueiredo, B. (2010). Father's emotional involvement with the neonate: The impact of childbirth experience. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, *under review*

## CONCLUSIONS

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- Results point out that the umbilical cord cutting experience may benefit father's emotional involvement with the neonate during his/her first month of life
- Results support the benefits of father's empowerment and participation in childbirth
- Midwives have an intervening role as a facilitator of the father-neonate emotional involvement
- This study presents some limitations, concerning the social context in which it was carried out
- In the future, it would be interesting to developing it in different social context

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