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## **Paternity in the Brazilian Context**

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Mauro Luís Vieira, Maria Aparecida Crepaldi,  
Carina Nunes Bossardi, Lauren Beltrão Gomes,  
Simone Dill Azeredo Bolze and  
César-Augusto Piccinini

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### **1. Introduction**

This chapter aims to report and discuss studies investigating paternity in the Brazilian context. Primarily, it presents a contextual and theoretical discussion about the changing roles of fathers and mothers in different countries and the concepts concerning to the relation of father with his child and, subsequently, it presents a review of studies on paternity in Brazil.

The economic and social transformations have changed the structure, roles and functions of family members in the context of various countries. In both national and international scenarios, the changes caused by the increase of female participation in the labor market have changed the traditional model of fathers as providers, who go out to work while women are dedicated to home and children care. Greater paternal involvement in child care has been evidenced and opened space for future research, especially regarding the determinants of father's involvement. Mothers' roles and attitudes towards their children and families have also changed over the years, given the economic transformations in family settings in many countries such as India, Canada, Argentina, France, United States of American (Bornstein et al., 1996; Mendonça, Cossette, Strayer, & Gravel, 2011), and Brazil (Jablonski, 2010; Wagner, Predebon, Mosmann, & Verza, 2005).

Considered as a social system, responsible for the transmission of values, beliefs, ideas and meanings, family, therefore has a strong influence in children's behavior (Kreppner, 2000). New and diverse family settings are outlined, for example, divorced families, remarried, adoptive parents, families headed exclusively by men or women, homosexual couples, among others. These changes in family arrangements will influence parental behavior and attitudes

(Jablonski, 2010; Kamers, 2006). For instance, it is reasonable to think that the relationships in two-parent families with biological children differ from the relationships in remarried families, cohabiting stepfathers or stepmothers.

Changes in family structure and in the traditional family model (in which the father is identified as the provider, while the mother is responsible for the care of home and children) to a family functioning where household chores and child care are divided between father and mother, even if not in an egalitarian way, are identified as an outcome of female emancipation. Several researchers (Gauthier, Smeeding, & Furstenberg, 2004; Jablonski, 2010; Mendonça, et al., 2011; Perucchi & Beirão, 2007; Saraff & Srivastava, 2010; Wagner, et al., 2005) emphasize that the increased participation of women in the labor market generates changes in gender relations, late marriages, decrease in the number of children and greater autonomy and independence for women, which in turn cause changes in parental roles (Jablonski, 2007).

Maternal and paternal roles are multidimensional, complex and varied, and thus need to be considered in their cultural, historical and intergenerational dimensions, comprising a diversity of roles, modes of participation, and multiple determinants (Dessen & Silva Neto, 2000; Kreppner, 2000; Lamb, 1997). Father's role can be classified as: traditional (provider), modern (part of the academic and moral development of children) or emerging (sharing the activities with the mother wife) (Dessen & Lewis, 1998).

More studies about changes in paternal involvement may contribute to the understanding of how paternity is being configured (Fleck & Wagner, 2003). For that, fathers can be used as informants in an attempt to understand the activities they actually engage in with their children. Obtaining data from multiple informants with a multi-methodological approach, longitudinal, comparative and cross-cultural planning can promote advances in the field of family psychology. Rather than studying the types of family, it is important to establish a planning of interfamilial studies to check the conditions within families and differences among family members (Dessen & Lewis, 1998; Dessen & Silva Neto, 2000; Kreppner, 2000).

Authors who write about modern families agree that among family settings – such as those composed by two-parents, single-parents, divorced or remarried parents, both men and women, for the most part, perform activities outside the home, or have a professional occupation. In these terms, it seems that the mother continues to assume the greatest responsibility at home and in caring for children, while the father participates in providing support in some tasks. Children suffer an important decrease in meeting their basic needs - emotional and entertaining - due to the reduction of hours spent in the company of parents (Fleck & Wagner, 2003; Jablonski, 2010; Mendonça, et al., 2011; Perucchi & Beirão, 2007).

Some studies published today focus on family issues related to parenting, but most of them still focus primary on motherhood, maybe because mothers continue to be the primary caregiver in various societies (Keller & Chasiotis, 2007). However, some literature review such as the one carried out by Souza and Benetti (Souza & Benetti, 2009) and Borsa and Nunes (Borsa & Nunes, 2011) show that studies concerned specifically on paternity has increased in recent decades. Further studies are needed to check if there are changes in parental relationships and, if they exist, their impact in family and society (Borsa & Nunes, 2011).

Nowadays, when referring to family configurations, some authors prefer, instead of focusing on the influence exerted by each parent, to emphasize the combined influence of both parents, through the definition of coparenting (Dubeau, Devault, & Paquette, 2009; Gomes & Resende, 2004; Silva & Piccinini, 2007). Coparenting is defined by the reciprocal and joint involvement of both parents in education, training and decisions regarding children's lives, meaning that father and mother share the leadership and support each other in their roles as householders and parents. In the current context of Western societies, in which father involvement has been increasingly valued, understanding how coparenting affects human development has become of great importance, either for theoretical or interventional purposes. Coparenting is influenced by individual characteristics of each parent (education, mental health, and well-being), the dynamics of marital relationships, family factors, and extra-family environment. It is composed by the agreement regarding parenting practices, the division of labor, and mutual support between the dyads (Frizzo, Kreutz, Schmidt, Piccinini, & Bosa, 2005).

Surveys show changes in parental roles as the result of women entering the labor market, and of greater paternal involvement in child care and household chores (Saraff & Srivastava, 2010; Silva & Piccinini, 2007; Wagner, et al., 2005). The increased participation of women in the labor market is seen as a factor that had led men to take more responsibility at home. Working outside the home reduces the contact established between the mother and her children. Thus, the father, who used to spend most of his time outside the home to ensure family support, is called to establish a more direct contact with his children. Although occurring at a much smaller scale than expected or desired, the participation and involvement of fathers in child care and household functions are being shown, even if the mother is still identified as the main responsible for home and child care (Jablonski, 2010).

Several studies aim at characterizing paternal functions within the family and in child development, demonstrating an increase in paternal involvement and pointing to a movement for greater involvement of fathers in child care (Frizzo, et al., 2005; Goetz & Vieira, 2009; Pleck, 1997; Silva & Piccinini, 2007). Investigations on mothers', and especially on fathers' parenting, which have been recently gaining prominence, have been adopting different conceptualizations, which will be discussed below.

### **1.1. Investment, involvement and engagement**

The term investment comes from an evolutionary comprehension, considering the direct and indirect activities undertaken by fathers and mothers that contribute or not to the immediate survival of species (Hewlett, 1992; Trivers, 1972). The term involvement is understood as a type of investment that refers to activities in which parents interact directly or indirectly with children, seeking care (Lamb, 1997; Lamb, Pleck, Chanov, & Levine, 1985). The term engagement is the most recent in psychological literature, being introduced in studies of paternity, and used as a synonym for involvement (Dubeau, et al., 2009).

The parental investment theory was proposed by Trivers (Trivers, 1972), who defines the term as the investment of energy, once the guarantee for species' survival and the chances of

reproductive success depend on a high investment, as well as on the amount of energy involved in that process. Thus, parental investment is understood as the degree in which each sex invests in their offspring, meaning any investment parents (father and mother) make in favor of the offspring to increase survival and reproduction, thus reinforcing the link between parental investment and sexual selection. The sex who invests more in the offspring (female) is the most demanding in terms of partners' choice, while the sex who invests less (male) competes more actively with members of the opposite sex to ensure reproductive success (Borriane & Lordelo, 2005; Trivers, 1972).

More specifically, the parental investment involves both evolutionary and cultural aspects (Geary, 2000). Among the factors associated with the evolution of parental investment are: the survival of offspring, mating opportunities, and certainty of paternity (or maternity). Cultural factors relate to the desire for social equality among maternal and paternal functions, meaning the understanding that both men and women should contribute to the welfare of children. The integrative perspective between the two dimensions (evolution and culture) can be a factor important to better understand the complexity of parental investment. However, is necessary also to understand how the individuals experiencing the maternity and paternity currently. In this case are used different terms such as involvement and engagement.

Regarding the term involvement, the definition mostly adopted in the literature refers to the concept of Lamb, Pleck, Charnov, and Levine (Lamb, et al., 1985), which define its' three dimensions: accessibility (presence and availability of the parent to the child, though without direct interaction between them), interaction (engagement or direct contact with the child in care and shared activities, such as play or leisure), and responsibility (parental role in providing care and resources, such as taking the child to the doctor or attending meeting at school).

The term paternal engagement is adopted by some authors (Dubeau, et al., 2009) (and is similar, in some extend to the concept of paternal involvement). It is defined as participation and ongoing concern of the biological father or stepfather, regarding the physical and psychological development and well-being of his children. Engagement is expressed in different forms: 1) Interaction: the presence of the father with the child, directly or indirectly, 2) Basic care: share of everyday tasks, 3) Affectionate: provides gestures and words that reassure and encourage the child; 4) Responsibility: performs tasks for the development of the child; 5) Provider: promotes financial support for the child's needs and 6) Evocative / significant: father who thinks about the child.

Futhermore, Turcotte and Gaudet (Turcotte & Gaudet, 2009) performed an analysis of the forms and terms most used in the paternal studies which are interconnected: 1) parental participation, and especially fathers' participation, has been defined by the intensity of the relationship established with the child (how long the parent spends with the child); 2) the nature of the relationship with the child (what the parent does with the child) and 3) the quality of the relationship established with the child (how the parent does with the child).

Since the term engagement is recent in the psychological literature, it is not frequently adopted, especially by the Brazilian literature (Gomes, Bossardi, Crepaldi, & Vieira, 2010). It was originally introduced in studies of paternity, since social changes paved the way for the



conceptualization of each parent's engagement, and the involvement of mothers had been already studied for years.

In summary, parenting over time and in different societies has changed. This situation is potentiated in relation to paternity. On the other hand, different terms and concepts are used to describe the dimension or factors related to this phenomenon (the father in the familiar context), which are linked with different theories and epistemological perspectives. In the next section is showed the specificities of paternity in the Brazilian context. Through an integrative review of the literature will show the extent and nature of parental involvement in the family context in Brazil.

## 1.2. Scientific literature on paternity in Brazil: An overview

Between 1960 and 1976, only 3% of the Brazilian studies on child development included the father (Dessen & Lewis, 1998). The results of these studies were similar, in some extension, to that detached by other authors (for example, Lamb, 1997), in other contexts, emphasizing that the main father's role was to play with the children and that the greater impact of father involvement on children's development consisted in the promotion of girls' social development and children's sexual identity formation. Only in the 80's the themes related to the social construction of masculinity and their influence in the performance of parenting emerged more consistently in the literature, indicating a more effective participation of Brazilian fathers in the family routine (Hennigen & Guareschi, 2002). However, until the late 90's few studies had effectively investigated paternal behavior and father-child relationship, since most research on child development and well-being remained focused on the mother-child dyad (Lewis & Dessen, 1999). It is since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century that scientific research has been demonstrating the new characterization father's role more emotionally involved and committed to their children, and as capable as mothers to educate their children (Souza & Benetti, 2009), even if it remains in the social imaginary the traditional structure of the provider parent.

Review studies of scientific literature on paternity are crucial to identify which aspects of the subject are investigated by researches in a specific society. In this sense, this chapter aims at presenting an overview of the Brazilian scientific production, through the publication of empirical articles related to paternal behavior and experience. Considering that the choice for a research topic aims at contributing to the advancement of knowledge in a specific field, reviews of literature are helpful in indicating how the configuration of fatherhood in a society is. Furthermore, it may allow us to take a more objective perspective on data regarding the current reality of paternity in the family and their relationship with children.

In order to characterize the research on paternity in Brazil, it was conducted an integrative review of the literature, which it is a research method that allows the search, critical evaluation and synthesis of the available evidence on a topic investigated. The revision was based on publications found in the following databases: The Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO), Electronic Journals in Psychology (PePSIC) and INDEXPsi Technical and Scientific Journals, all indexed in the portal Virtual Library of Psychology (BVS-Psi). The descriptors selected for screening publications were *father*, *paternity*, and *paternal*. Previously to the definition of descriptors it was conducted a consultation in the Terminology Psychology BVS-

Psi and the site of the Health Sciences Descriptors (DeCS), BVS. The terms *father* and *paternity* were indexed in at least one of the sites mentioned above. We chose to add the search function on the *paternal* descriptor that makes specific reference to the variable of interest in this study.

Regarding the limits of the search, the studies selected for analysis comprised only scientific articles published between the years from 2000 until 2012, with full text available and that provide results and discussions about the father figure, even when paternity was not the central theme. We excluded books, book chapters, reviews, theses, dissertations, and articles without full text available. From a total of 1447 documents found, 90 complete articles were chosen to be analyzed in function of their contributions to the production of knowledge of fatherhood in Brazil. The analysis of the articles was carried out in according to the structure of nine categories which represent the major topics of interest on fathers and fatherhood research in the Brazilian context. The following we describe each category and present the main finds.

## 2. Family configurations

This category includes issues investigated by several studies that present the new characteristics of family's configurations which are different from the traditional one. It refers to families with stepfather, due to divorce, adoption or remarried families. Examples of the major issues referred in this category are described below.

One study (Grzybowski & Wagner, 2010) investigated parenting practices of mothers and fathers who are divorced or separated, emphasizing that even in this situation mothers were more involved with their children than fathers, and mothers usually cohabited with children. The results reveal a traditional configuration of parental involvement after separation/divorce, meaning that the maternal involvement is greater than the paternal after the end of marriage, and that cohabitation may lead to greater direct involvement with children.

The process of adopting a child has a specific configuration within the family dynamic and organization, once men who wish to have a child see in adoption an opportunity to become fathers. Fathers interviewed referred desire to form a family composed by the couple and their children, although they also reported difficulties with the legal adoption and the threat of biological parents. Parents claim to be happy and satisfied with the adoption, and describe the role of father as good, requiring a present and accountable parent in daily activities. The articles (Andrade, Costa, & Rossetti-Ferreira, 2006; Tomé & Schermann, 2004) dealing with non-biological parents, as in the case of adoption or stepfathers, refer to the construction of paternity in a context that aims at overcoming the lack of consanguineous ties by affective ones. In adoptive parenthood, even when inserted in the labor market, mothers are the primary caregivers, as well as those who primarily perform the home chores, while fathers assume the role of helpers and of dealing with the economic support.

Couples who get together to form a family were, for a long time, the focus of research. However, given current social and economic changes, many women begin to participate

actively in the labor market, starting to head up their families, and being responsible for livelihood as well. These findings show the coexistence with traditional family arrangements of single parent homes, consisting of one parent (usually the mother), as well as divorced or remarried families, who do not require the coexistence of a parent with the child. In such cases, in most studies the father is focused as the parental figure who leaves home and starts living with another family - with biological children or not, which is reconstituted through remarriage (Jablonski, 2010; Kamers, 2006; Wagner, et al., 2005). Research indicates that even in cases of non-biological children, such as adoption and the existence of stepfathers, parental involvement and participation become possible through the construction of emotional bonds that overcome the limitation of consanguinity. Even in divorced, remarried families, or with adoptive parents, mothers' role in caring for children seems to be more expressive, while fathers assume traditional roles in supporting mothers and children. Therefore, the mother appears as the primary responsible and the father as a helper in this process (Perucchi & Beirão, 2007; Wagner, et al., 2005).

### **3. The father in the context of pregnancy, birth, and postpartum**

This category includes Brazilian studies on paternal involvement during periods of pregnancy, birth, and postpartum, encompassing topics such as breastfeeding and non-normative events, such as postpartum depression, prematurity, and admission to neonatal intensive care units. It is subdivided into the subcategories described below:

#### **3.1. Pregnancy**

The pregnancy of wife or partner was the subject of seven studies. One of the studies (Piccinini, Silva, Gonçalves, Lopes, & Tudge, 2004) included as participants men who were expecting their first child and the results indicate that fathers were involved in different ways during the pregnancy of their partners, being emotionally connected to both the mother and the baby. However, some of these fathers still found difficulties of involvement with their children, seemingly not perceiving them as real and showing low emotional connection to pregnancy. In contrast, one of the studies (Piccinini, Levandowski, Gomes, Lindenmeyer, & Lopes, 2009) investigated the expectations and feelings of future fathers about their babies and the authors concluded that few fathers reported difficulty imagining the baby: they had built a mental image of the baby, including their physical and psychological characteristics. Moreover, they had participated in the choice of name and raised concerns about the child's health. Another paper (Krob, Piccinini, & Silva, 2009) was characterized as a longitudinal study that investigated the expectation of men during the last trimester of the partner's pregnancy, as well as feelings about fatherhood during the second month of the baby's life. Results indicate that pregnancy was experienced as emotionally intense, characterized by joy, anxiety, and conflict. Men also reported concerns about the baby and the partner's health, as well as feelings of exclusion. After the child's birth, the sense of exclusion persisted. However, fathers reported positive feelings



and satisfaction, confirming the expectations built up during pregnancy. The involvement in caring for the baby was not as effective as planned, although there was great affection and closeness between father and infant (Krob, et al., 2009). These data point to signs of changes concerning paternity during pregnancy, which is increasingly less restricted to the female universe.

One of the researches (Martini, Piccinini, & Gonçalves, 2010) investigated indicators of *couvade* syndrome in primiparous parents during wives' pregnancy. This syndrome is characterized by a set of physical and psychological symptoms experienced mainly by biological fathers starting in the first and third trimesters of their partners' pregnancy, and ending shortly after the baby's birth. Participants in this study were 30 couples in different periods of pregnancy. Results revealed that more than half of the fathers had physical (increased appetite, food preference, and episodes of nausea) and/or emotional indicators (nervousness and moodiness) associated with *couvade* syndrome. Thus, the presence of indicators of *couvade* syndrome among fathers showed the complexity in the transition to parenthood, and the importance of understanding fathers' experiences and feelings during wives or partners' pregnancy.

Another study (Witter & Guimarães, 2008) aimed at verifying the perception of pregnant teens (females) regarding the participation of their partners in monitoring pregnancy. The study showed that about 66% of the participants had their partners participating in the process of pregnancy in several ways, which indicate the evidence of fathers' positive attitudes and behaviors towards pregnancy. Another study involving pregnant adolescents stresses the importance of rethinking the question of including fathers in prenatal public programs (Siqueira, Mendes, Finkler, Guedes, & Gonçalves, 2002).

Thus, it is clear that men can experience their wives or partners' pregnancy in terms of physical and emotional dimensions. The father participation in children's lives from pregnancy corroborates the perception of pregnancy as a period of transition to the exercise of parenthood, allowing the emergence of feelings of inclusion, and helping men to develop their new role as fathers. At this stage, values and priorities are reconfigured in the conjugal relationship. Some men refer concerns about fetal malformation, adversities in contemporary world, and the period of adolescence their children will face (Bornholdt, Wagner, & Staud, 2007). Other concerns related by adolescent fathers in the exercise of parenthood are financial difficulties, and the desire to be involved in children's development.

### 3.2. Childbirth

The investigation of father's involvement in childbirth was the subject of four studies. The experience of childbirth is considered a unique experience in the men and women's lives. One of the studies (Perdomini & Bonilha, 2011) revealed that fathers understand that their role involves to be present, to give comfort, and to use words of support. Fathers believe the opportunity of experiencing the birth of their child, regardless of the number of births accompanied by them, to be a unique experience, and a moment hard to explain. Another study (Motta & Crepaldi, 2005) showed that mothers think be important the presence of their partners in the delivery, because they represent important emotional support references. The

father often has a desire to attend the childbirth, though not always receiving the support of team of health care, especially in the case of the father being a teenager (Luz & Berni, 2010).

The study of Carvalho (2003) aimed to investigate in a public hospital the impact children's birth had on men. The authors conclude that paternal involvement was influenced by various factors, such as institutional difficulties, mothers and fathers' motivation, social representations on childbirth and paternity, and the exclusion of father from reproductive health and pediatric services. The presence of fathers was not valued by staff neither as support for mothers, or as a transitional phase to fatherhood (Carvalho, 2003). In this way, is necessary to encourage the participation of fathers in prenatal care, childbirth, postpartum and pediatrics appointments, the training of staff working with families, the expansion of social discussion about fatherhood, and the formulation of labor policies that ensure the presence of fathers in health services. For this reason, it should be noted that it is necessary that hospitals comply with the Brazilian Law No. 11,108, enacted on April 7, 2005, which ensures the presence of the partner of choice during women's labor.

### **3.3. Prematurity and monitoring of the child in the Intensive Care Unit - ICU**

Paternal participation at the ICU in the case of premature births was investigated in four studies. One of the studies (Tronchin & Tsunehiro, 2005) stressed the importance of fathers' presence in child care during hospitalization and in supporting mothers. Another research indicates that fathers of preterm babies engage in psychic reorganization because they need to carry out unexpected activities (Coutinho & Morsch, 2006). The same study presents the concept of 'engrossment', which refers to fathers' predisposition to show paternal concern and interest by their babies. It also claims that fathers' experience in ICU allows them to fall in love with their preterm babies, and to admire their strength and ability to fight for life. The same authors (Coutinho & Morsch, 2006) also showed that the moments of hospitalization considered by mothers and fathers as the most painful were the delivery, the first visit to the baby at the ICU, the mother's first visit to the baby in neonatal intensive care unit, and the moment of leaving the hospital, when the couple 'leaves empty-handed', having to leave the child under hospital care. Research results also indicate that having a hospitalized child in the intensive care unit is an experience that triggers unexpected reactions of shock, disbelief, grief, and deep sorrow (Tronchin & Tsunehiro, 2006), fear, anguish, anxiety, loneliness, but also joy and hope (Carvalho, Araújo, Costa, Brito, & Souza, 2009). However, information received from health-care professionals is important and represents a relief to parents frightened and frail in the face of this situation. Therefore, studies underscore the need to create models of care that include the father in this process, so that he can learn to work with this reality, defining and implementing measures to ensure his role in child care (Tronchin & Tsunehiro, 2005; Tronchin & Tsunehiro, 2006). After leaving the ICU, fathers reported to be joyful and to experience a sense of relief. However, this period was also permeated by difficulties, especially for those whose children needed special care. Religiosity and faith were described in two studies, regardless of religion, as an important resource for dealing with the situation (Carvalho, et al., 2009; Tronchin & Tsunehiro, 2006).

### 3.4. Puerperium

One of the studies (Oliveira & Brito, 2009) investigated fathers' attitudes in the household during the postpartum period, and concluded that men take care of their partners and offer them advice concerning physical recovery and injury prevention. Fathers also recognize that the partner and the newborn require more dedication and time after birth, and develop attitudes of dedication and concern about the child's health. Their accounts also confirm they prepare financially for children's arrival, playing the role of main provider to the family (Jager & Bottoli, 2011; Oliveira & Brito, 2009).

Another article (Maranhão, Gomes, & Oliveira, 2012) showed that during pregnancy men had performed tasks that require more physical effort (such as cooking, doing the laundry, and performing other heavy activities). When the baby was born, however, this concern disappeared and fathers failed to assist mothers with household chores, while spending more time caring for their children, especially when they are older. In this way, one other study (Falceto, Fernandes, Baratojo, & Giugliani, 2008) involving 153 families with babies of four months, the authors concluded that there is a high prevalence of families in which the father is not actively involved in children's care, especially when the marital relationship is problematic and mothers do not have a paid job. The feeling of emotional detachment between the couple appears as a significant factor in the postpartum period (Maranhão, et al., 2012).

Regarding breastfeeding, studies have indicated that men do not participate in encouraging this practice, because they did not have this experience in their own families, schools and/or health institutions. Hence, they do not recognize the importance of this act (Pontes, Alexandrino, & Osório, 2008; Pontes, Alexandrino, & Osório, 2009). The authors propose the construction of a model to encourage fathers' involvement in this practice, and to design a health program with the goal of changing the culture of breastfeeding, increasing the duration of breastfeeding.

Regarding the non-normative events in the puerperium, the differences in dyadic (mother-infant, father-infant and mother-father) and triadic relationships (father-mother-child) were investigated in families with and without maternal depression, during a session of free interaction (Frizzo & Piccinini, 2007). Only one category involving cognitive stimulation was significantly different between the mother-infant and father-child dyads in families with maternal depression, indicating that, despite the depression mothers stimulated their babies more than fathers. Families without the experience of depression also showed higher disengagement (less emotional involvement and responsiveness) in father-infant than in mother-infant dyads. For the authors, it is possible that fathers exercise a moderating role in the possible effects of maternal depression in the family, perhaps mitigating such effects in triadic contexts, once there seems to be a change in the family pattern in families with maternal depression.

## 4. The father and the performance of his functions

This category is related to the performance of the paternal role and the achievement of tasks and practices related to child care. The way each parent exercises his/her parental role depends

on several factors, including welfare, availability and satisfaction of both mothers and fathers with their activities. Fathers and mothers tend to evaluate positively their performance of parental roles, and to feel satisfied, although not so competent, in relation to their functions. Stress and emotional well-being may interfere with their satisfaction and perception of their parental role (Ribas, Ribas Junior, & Valente, 2006).

In another study (Bruschini & Ricoldi, 2012), fathers reported to children's care and domestic tasks with their wives, even corroborating the role of others as providers and moral supervisors. Furthermore, men showed concern for being involved in tasks related to feeding, hygiene, and doing the homework. The traditional role often includes the affective dimension and fathers' concerns with children (Freitas et al., 2009; Pereira Junior, Siqueira, & Rezende, 2011). Although there is evidence of the increases paternal involvement in child care, the same is not true with respect to household chores, indicating the predominance of fathers' care to the child, but not of fathers as the main responsible for the home (Sutter & Bucher-Maluschke, 2008). Some fathers, even performing activities such as feeding, bathing and caring directly to their children, still refer to these activities as female responsibilities in children's lives, while considering themselves responsible for disciplining, guiding, and monitoring of children's conducts (Bustamante, 2005a; Romanelli, 2003). Satisfaction in the relationship with their wives seems to favor the involvement of fathers with the child and increases their participation in basic care and responsibilities in raising children (Bustamante, 2005b). Participants reported that being a father includes functions that go beyond the responsibility as providers, thus involving being present and establishing limits and responsibilities to children.

In relation to educational practices, participants reported frequently adopting inductive practices - indicating to children the consequences of their behaviors to other people, while calling attention to logical aspects of the situation -, in contrast to coercive practices, characterized by the direct application of imposition to control children's behaviors (Piccinini, Frizzo, Alvarenga, Lopes, & Tudge, 2007). It was also found that participants displayed a profile closer to self-relational models in relation to their socialization goals. Parents wanted their children to be self-reliant, independent, and professionally successful, while valuing them being honest and executors of his duties with the family and society.

In synthesis, studies show changes in both paternal functions and parental roles, resulting from the increased participation of women in the labor market. It has been noted a greater paternal involvement in childcare and household chores, even if mothers continue to be identified as the main responsible for such activities. Although fathers and mothers have different roles, they seem to be complementary, and to express changes if their participation in children's care, moving from a traditional model of division of labor to the sharing of functions. The social, economic and family changes, the concepts of co-parenting and the notion of complementarity of parental functions are important factors to be considered in the study of parental involvement and in the characterization of maternity and paternity in contemporary family.



## 5. Impact of paternity on children

This category deals with the impact of fathers in children's development and behavior. According to Benczik (Benczik, 2011), the literature indicates that the effective participation of fathers in family life promotes to children safety, self-esteem, emotional stability, and independence. Along these lines, some research in Brazil has shown the implications of fathers in the school context. Cia and Barham (2009), for instance, found a positive relationship between paternal involvement in children's school, cultural and leisure activities, and the academic performance of children in 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grades. In one study conducted with parents of children enrolled at the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grades, the authors found that paternal involvement was associated with low rates of hyperactivity and behavioral problems, and these children displayed more appropriate social skills.

However, inadequate paternal practices (such as hostile and antisocial behaviors) may have negative consequences for children (Jaffee, Moffitt, Caspi, & Taylor, 2003). One case study conducted with a family exposed to multiple adversities indicates that some aspects may function as protective factors; one of these factors is fathers' sensitivity to their children's needs (Silva, Lacharité, Silva, Lunardi, & Lunardi Filho, 2009). The authors also mention that fathers' accepting support in their roles as children's caregivers and providers emerged from the data as something significant, with a positive impact on both fathers (who felt supported) and children, who meet a safer father in performing his functions.

In synthesis, the father is a figure that has an important role to children. However, it is not only the father's presence that will ensure this importance, but the quality of the relationship established between fathers and children. The focus on quality also applies to the relationship mothers establish with children. For example, it has been found that parenting styles perceived by teens as neglectful, indulgent or authoritarian had significant association with drug use (Benchaya, Bisch, Moreira, Ferigolo, & Barros, 2011). When these educational styles are displayed by mothers, the chances for teenagers to use drugs increases in three times. The role performed by fathers, however, does not seem to have the same relevance. For instance, fathers' authoritative style is not associated with children's drug use.

If paternal involvement has a positive effect on children, one question that arises is what happens when the father is not present. In a literature review with data from Brazil and other countries, authors have indicate that due to current family structure fathers' absence is an increasing reality in families (Eizirik & Bergmann, 2004). This context may have behavioral and emotional implications for children. Thus, the authors conducted a case study and found that fathers' absence can lead to conflicts in children's psychological development. In that specific case, there was evidence of behavioral problems even considering the mother had played an important role in minimizing these problems. In another study, Lopes and Paula (2011) studied two groups of adolescents (one group lived with their fathers, while the other did not). The authors found that half of the sample of the group 1 chose a substitute figure for the father; the other half, in which this has not occurred, there was a strong influence of the maternal figure in their career choice. That is, in the absence of either the father or of a father



figure, the mother occupies this role. However, it is not known what the implications are for youth of this change in the reference figure.

## **6. Variables that affect the exercise of paternity**

This category includes research dealing with variables that influence the exercise of paternity. The literature suggests that the characteristics of fathers and children, the family and social environment are factors that can increase or decrease fathers' participation in their children's lives. Three surveys constitute this category. Fathers' occupation is the focus in two of them (Fabiana Cia & Barham, 2008; Souza & Benetti, 2008). These studies investigate the influence of unemployment, as well as working conditions and work shifts (night or day), in the activities performed by fathers. Another survey (Silva & Guzzo, 2007) deals with the situation of incarcerated fathers and their children. Variables such as paternal depression, social-economic conditions (fathers' educational level and income), and family relationships are also investigated.

Results of these three studies agree that the labor factor, as well as paternal educational level, conditions and social environment for family coexistence seem to be associated to paternal involvement. The higher father's educational level and the better his working conditions and income are the greater father's involvement. The existence of a high degree of affection between the father and his wife is also related to great involvement with his children. Living with their children can also affect the quality of paternal relationship. Incarcerated fathers, who maintain contact with their children through visits or letters, refer concerns about the lack of contact with the children, as well as with their children's future.

Although the mentioned studies focus on the determinants or variables that affect fathers' engagement, it is possible to recognize many gaps in the literature regarding paternal engagement and its determinants. In terms of the variables influencing paternal behavior, it is necessary to emphasize that the level of paternal commitment results from the dynamic interaction of factors such as fathers' characteristics (experiences from their own childhood, attitudes and beliefs about gender roles, feelings of competence and socio-demographic characteristics), family characteristics (relationship with their wives and mothers' attitudes and behavior towards paternity, including whether mothers encourage or inhibit paternal participation), children's characteristics (gender, age, and temperament) and characteristics of the social environment (life and working conditions, culture, and social policies). The relationship with their wives, mothers' perception about the paternal role, maternal encouragement and facilitation of paternal participation can lead to variations in paternal involvement. Children's characteristics, such as gender, age and temperament can impact the level of paternal involvement. The social environment, such as financial instability and work characteristics can be associated with paternal behavior as well. It seems that employment instability and low income affect fathers' attitudes with children. Although these evidences were found in several studies, results are inconclusive and often contradictory, which means that new variables should be better investigated.

## 7. Gender identity

Gender identity and the roles played by males are discussed in relation to parenting. The four articles that address this theme refer to a new father who arises as the result of a redefinition of male identity in response to social changes. With women's emancipation, new male roles are outlined, and current fathers are faced with the new challenge of responding social demands required from them. Fathers are investigated concerning their feelings towards identity and paternity in this context of social changes. Gradual changes in the male role, especially with regards to paternity, are noted over the years. From the 1960s men are held more accountable for their actions in the domestic sphere and with children and, in subsequent years, there have been valued gender equality and a model of participant fathers (Santos, Caldana, & Alves, 2001). Marriage reconfigures masculinity through paternity. Single men have an identity and responsibilities different from married men. Paternity is not only about having children, but is related as the ability to support and educate them (Almeida & Hardy, 2007; Freitas, Coelho, & Silva, 2007 ). The traditional model of paternity according to which fathers are defined exclusively as providers coexists with a new model where fathers' affective bonding is valued from pregnancy. It seems that fathers are asked to take on additional functions beyond those typically performed, thus modifying the meaning of paternity. Pregnancy constitutes a change in male role as well, since fathers can establish an emotional bond with children from conception (Almeida & Hardy, 2007; Freitas, et al., 2007).

Changes in parental involvement are also found in studies that focus on gender identity. Once more male and female roles are highlighted as products of social changes that produce the redefinition of male roles and identity. Fathers try to adapt to the expected new model, which is characterized by greater participation in their children's lives, thus distancing from the traditional model on fatherhood.

## 8. Perception and conception on paternal behavior

The category refers to beliefs, values and cognitions related to paternity according to reports of mothers, children, fathers, and the media. Conceptions on paternity constructed by women who are heads of households refer to the valuation of present and participative fathers. These conceptions surpass the father/provider model and highlight their role as educators and authority figures, emphasizing the tasks of establishing limits and imposing rules of conduct. One study pointed to paternal involvement, especially in children's education, and as an essential factor in building children's personality (Perucchi & Beirão, 2007). While women interviewed perceived fathers' dedication in interacting with children, especially in joint activities, such as playing, singing, talking and going out, not all of them recognized these as care activities (Crepaldi, Andreani, Hammes, Ristof, & Abreu, 2006).

Three studies dealt with the concepts of real and ideal father (Goetz & Vieira, 2008; Goetz & Vieira, 2009; Prado, Piovanotti, & Vieira, 2007). Parents believe the ideal of paternal behavior to be far from the real behavior in relation to social interactions and educational dimensions.

However, with respect to discipline (identified as an area of great paternal involvement), fathers consider a match between the ideal and the actual paternal behavior. In relation to the actual behavior, it has been noted a trend fathers assessing their participation as more effective than mothers' assessment. Regarding the participation in household chores, fathers consider their concrete participation to be optimal, whereas mothers expect more commitment from her partners. Men indicate they should be more involved with their children (Goyea, Omene, & Ogbebor, 1979).

According to reports from children between 10 and 11 years-old, the real father does not match the ideal one in aspects related to care and interaction, especially in families in which parents are separated (Goetz & Vieira, 2008). This study have showed a match between the ideal and the real mother while there is the expectation that the ideal father be more involved in care and devote more time to play and fun. Children whose parents live together understand that caring and interacting through play should be performed by both parents, privileging an equal sharing of parental tasks.

Two studies investigated the conception of university students on parental roles. In one study, mothers are seen as the central figure in families and are identified as responsible for household chores (Rabinovich, Moreira, & Franco, 2012). Fathers are no longer identified as primarily responsible for providing economic support to the family, because this responsibility is now shared with mothers. While preserving some aspects of the traditional view on parental roles, indicating mothers as primary caregivers (Perosa & Pedro, 2009; Rabinovich, et al., 2012) and responsible for household chores the respondents refer that fathers play with young children and provide emotional support for the whole family (Perosa & Pedro, 2009). It has been noted that fathers are affectionate with their children, and seem to be in a transition time, playing both old and new roles (Gabriel & Dias, 2011).

Paternity was also investigated in relation to how it is seen and influenced by the media. The media is an important vehicle for the transmission of values. It appears that the model portrayed is of a father who is available and participates in children's lives. There is a desire to show the new man who comes to parenting, who must adjust to the demands of both the traditional and the new father (Chechi & Hillesheim, 2008). According to several participants, such as children, mothers, fathers and the media, paternity is perceived as a phenomenon in transition, where traditional roles are mixed with more modern roles, being expected from fathers to be loving, caring, and more participative in parenting.

## **9. Father in the context of adolescence**

This category covers paternity in the context of adolescence. The articles analyzed here refer to teenage parents or parents who have children in their teens. In one of these articles (Trindade & Menandro, 2002), there are discussions about the planning and the desirability of pregnancy with the partner, and about the use of contraceptive methods and prevention, suggesting the need for public policy on sexual and reproductive rights that can guide teenagers to play their parental roles effectively.

On the other hand, the partner was identified as being responsible for the pregnancy or its prevention, which refers to an ancient pattern of reproductive allocation of responsibility to women. It was also pointed out the positive aspects of parenthood. Teenage parents were satisfied with their condition as fathers, and reported attachment to their children, even considering the increase of responsibility (Meincke & Carraro, 2009; Trindade & Menandro, 2002). For the subjects of these two studies, the father is the one who works and supports his children, as well as the one who accompanies, educates and prepares them for life.

Furthermore, family support and encouragement were central to the exercise of adolescent fatherhood. It is emphasized the importance of supporting men at this stage, so that they can experience responsible parenthood with all the changes it encompasses. Family contributes to both providing support and transmitting parental role models (Meincke & Carraro, 2009).

On the other hand, two other articles (Levandowski & Piccinini, 2002, 2006) compared adult and adolescents' fatherhood, and the results showed similar outcome in the two groups, suggesting that age did not appear to be a determining factor in the experience of parenthood. Parents appeared to be responsive to their children, living with them and their mothers (Levandowski & Piccinini, 2002, 2006).

Among the studies analyzed, one refers to the father who had child in his adolescent (Faria, 2007). The major difficulties reported by fathers were the affective approach, the establishment of limits, the aggressiveness, and the construction of adolescent autonomy. Being a parent of a teenager can make the man review his life. Even when this moment is experienced as distressing and conflicting, it can result in a positive solution for the father because of the broader approach to life, and to his child, because of the gain of autonomy.

In two studies, teenagers answered about the father. In one of them (Wagner, Falcke, Silveira, & Mosmann, 2002), about the family relationship, teenagers show little or no talk to the father, compared to the conversation with the mother, which shows a wide discrepancy between the parental figures. While being evaluated positively, father seems to occupy a peripheral place in adolescents' lives in regards to matters of personal and intimate contact. The other study (Sena & Farias, 2010) presents the importance of paternal role in disciplining and transmitting social norms to adolescents. When this function is not assumed, adolescents demonstrate intolerance and lack of boundaries that culminate in violence displayed in the school context.

Based on the assumption that parental involvement is understood as a complex and multiterminated phenomenon, the context of adolescence appears to be the focus of studies in the Brazilian scenario because it represents one important aspect of parental participation nowadays, which it involves specific risk and protective factors.

## **10. Father of disabled or hospitalized children**

This category is dedicated to scientific researches that have focused on studying the characteristics of fatherhood in the context of parents with hospitalized children or parents with children with disabilities. Some studies have investigated various dimensions of parenting in



parents of children with any health problems, such as congenital heart disease, leukemia and intellectual disabilities. It is highlighted the prevalence of Down Syndrome as one of the main focus of investigations (Henn & Piccinini, 2010; Pereira-Silva & Dessen, 2006). Overall, the researchers showed the importance of the father figure to children's development, and some of them emphasize the deep involvement of fathers in children's treatment (Chacon, 2011; Henn & Piccinini, 2010; Kruehl & Lopes, 2012). Despite the deep involvement, the father usually performs the role of a collaborator in the task of caring for children and the home, providing occasional assistance to the mother (Canho, Neme, & Yamada, 2006; Chacon, 2011). It is possible to perceive the continuity of the traditional division of parental roles, as several studies that show fathers as the main providers of financial support to the family, thus having less time to stay with their children when compared to mothers (Canho, et al., 2006; Chacon, 2011; Henn & Piccinini, 2010).

It appears that there are differences in parents' time for assimilating children's disability (Pereira-Silva & Dessen, 2006). The information is usually given by the doctor. However, when the disability does not have a high degree of visibility and prejudice, it will only be seen over time. The shock of the discovery, as well as behaviors and feelings of rejection are reported by both fathers (Chacon, 2011; Kruehl & Lopes, 2012) and mothers (Kruehl & Lopes, 2012). However, even if fathers have similar feelings than related to the diagnosis of children, cultural beliefs about male behavior seem to affect the exercise of paternity (Chacon, 2011). In this sense, the research of Canho et al. (2006) revealed that fathers have used denial, repression of feelings and rationalization as the main defense mechanisms when facing the diagnosis of children with hearing problems. The paternal figure also seems to adopt an attitude of companion and protection towards the baby and the mother, in addition to being the main responsible for maintaining the optimism of the entire family with regards to the sick child (Kruehl & Lopes, 2012).

Most parents refer to the feeling of fear to generate other children with disabilities, as well as low expectations in terms of their total independence. Among parents who have more than one child, most of them acknowledge the existence of differential treatment of the sick child on the basis of his disability (Chacon, 2011). It is stressed the importance of investing the relationship established between parents and health professionals, promoting their participation in children's treatment and informing them on how to properly stimulate their children. There is a lack of national surveys on variables related to fathers in families with children with special needs, indicating a promising field for future studies.

In synthesis, it has been noted concern by researchers in investigating paternal participation in various contexts, such as in the cases of different family configurations and adolescence, as discussed previously. Other unusual context is related in having children with disabilities or hospitalized. These situations configure a peculiarity that may cause changes in both the family development and the parenting. Such situations require specific interaction and care from the father with the child, and that even in this kind of situations the traditional roles held by father and mother are displayed.



One summary quantitative of articles analyzed are showed in the Table 1. The category ‘The father in the context of pregnancy, birth, and postpartum’ had the largest number of articles ( $n=22$ , 24,5%). The majority of the articles was characterized by qualitative approach ( $n=64$ , 71%) and transversal research ( $n=84$ , 93%). The survey was the method more used ( $n=68$ , 75%) and the father was the main participant in 54 researches (60% of studies).

Categories	Approach	Method	Participants	Transversal X Longitudinal
Family configurations (N= 4)	Quanti: 1 Quali: 3	Survey: 1 Study of case: 3	Father and mother: 3 Stepfather: 1	Transversal: 4
The father in the context of pregnancy, birth, and postpartum (N = 22)	Quanti: 2 Quali: 17 Mixed: 3	Survey: 20 Study of case: 1 Observation: 1	Father: 13 Father and mother: 4 Pregnant adolescents: 1 Parturient: 1 Adolescent mothers: 1 Families: 2	Transversal: 21 Longitudinal: 1
The father and the performance of his functions (N= 16)	Quanti: 5 Quali: 10 Mixed: 1	Survey: 15 Study of case: 1	Father and mother: 8 Father: 5 Child: 1 Father and mother and grandmother: 1 Father, mother and child: 1	Transversal: 16
Impact of paternity on children (N = 4)	Quanti: 2 Quali: 2	Survey: 3 Study of case: 1	Father and children: 1 Adolescent: 2 College students: 1	Transversal: 4
Variables that affect the exercise of paternity (N = 3)	Quanti: 2 Quali: 1	Survey: 3	Father: 3	Transversal: 3
Gender identity (N=4)	Quali: 4	Survey: 3 Study of case: 1	Articles: 1 Men: 1 Father: 2	Transversal: 4
Perception and conception on paternal behavior (N= 15)	Quali: 10 Quanti: 4 Mixed: 1	Survey: 10 Study of case: 5	Father: 2 Mother: 2 Father and mother: 2 Children: 5 Mother and children: 1 Others: 3	Transversal: 14 Longitudinal: 1
Father in the context of adolescence	Quanti: 1 Quali: 12	Survey: 9 Study of case: 3	Father: 8 Mother: 1	Transversal: 12 Longitudinal: 1

Categories	Approach	Method	Participants	Transversal X Longitudinal
(N=13)		Observation: 1	Women and men: 1 Men: 2 Movie: 1	
Father of disabled or hospitalized children (N=9)	Quali: 5 Quanti: 2 Mixed: 2	Survey: 4 Study of case: 3 Observation: 1 Experiment: 1	Father: 5 Father and mother: 2 Father, mother and children: 2	Transversal: 6 Longitudinal: 3

**Table 1.** A quantitative summary of the articles analyzed in function of different criteria.

11. Discussion and conclusion

The present study aimed to elucidate aspects of paternity in the Brazilian context through the scientific production published in Brazilian journals. The data analyzed showed that most of the existing research on paternity has been produced from 2000, and the interest of researchers seems to increase every year. The articles analyzed indicated that although mothers still appear as the main responsible for child care, fathers have been increasingly engaged in various aspects of their children's lives.

In Western societies, it is assumed that men and women's social roles have been changing, creating new expectations, beliefs and attitudes about how parents should act within the family (Jablonski, 2010; Wagner, et al., 2005). Specifically in Brazil, contemporary social changes, which include the entry of women in the labor market and new family configurations, modified the structure and patterns of family functioning, demanding from men a more active role as fathers. Such changes have implications to the family dynamics and to marital relationships, as well as to childcare, and have produced transformations in the roles and functions performed by each parent (Fleck & Wagner, 2003). The traditional view of fathers as main providers is changing, since women have been also exerting the role of family provider, while fathers have been gradually associated to greater participation in relation to child care (Gauthier, et al., 2004; Jablonski, 2010; Mendonça, et al., 2011; Perucchi & Beirão, 2007; Saraff & Srivastava, 2010; Wagner, et al., 2005).

However, the present review has shown that researches investigating different family configurations, such as divorced or adoptive parents indicate that men's attitudes seem to follow a pattern, regardless of the family configuration in which they are inserted as fathers or stepfathers. Generally, fathers, even when not biological, seem to be satisfied with their children. These results confirm the literature that show mothers to be the main responsible for children, while fathers are not usually responsible for children's daily care, appearing as adjuvants (Jablonski, 2010; Kamers, 2006).

Regarding pregnancy, the literature review demonstrates that, in general, men are involved in this stage of their partners' lives and report mixed feelings of joy and anxiety.

They even refer to physical and emotional reactions during pregnancy and these feelings seem to be important to prepare themselves for fatherhood. However, some fathers demonstrate difficulties in performing the new paternal role of greater participation and involvement in the partners' pregnancy. This probably happens because the future father feels lost and confused with his new role, once he is caught in redefinition process: on one side there are the demands to perform fathers' traditional roles (as family providers), and on the other there are the new demands for greater engagement with the mother and the baby (Bustamante, 2005b). Studies show that male participation in children's lives starting from pregnancy contributes to the perception of pregnancy as a period of transition to the exercise of fatherhood, allows for a feeling of inclusion, and helps fathers to develop their new role in the life cycle (Bornholdt, et al., 2007).

Concerning the participation in childbirth, there are fathers who wish to experience this moment and who see it as an opportunity unique. On the other hand, there are those who are afraid of being unprepared for the experience. Data also show that although mothers consider the presence of their partners in the parturition room as an important emotional reference (Motta & Crepaldi, 2005), fathers are not usually encouraged to do it, especially from the health team in charge. Even after the baby is born, men are not included in the routines of child care, and are very little motivated to do so. The articles call attention to the importance of providing encouragement to fathers' participation in the childbirth, which benefit both mother and baby. Along the same lines, Carvalho (2003) argues that fathers should be included in the process as a whole, and be encouraged to participate in prenatal care, childbirth, postpartum and pediatric appointments. The author still points to the need to formulate work policies that allow for the inclusion of fathers in health services. According to Crepaldi et al., (2006), the awareness of health and educational sectors is fundamental for the inclusion of fathers in child care.

The fact that mothers are considered the main interlocutors in these environments legitimates representations that fathers are unable to care for their children's issues, which position them as mere helpers for mothers and as family providers. In addition, it is noteworthy fathers' difficulties to engage with their children when they are born premature and need to stay in the Intensive Care Units (ICU). However, researches indicate that the experience of caring for a premature child can benefit father-child's bond (Tronchin & Tsunechiro, 2006). Hence, the support of the healthcare team should be reinforced.

In the puerperium phase, men seem unable to help much their partners, either with household chores or in breastfeeding. However, women in general report to be satisfied with men's behavior. Furthermore, although fathers do not carry out many functions soon after the baby's birth, they seem to have a role in mitigating the effects of postpartum depression when this event takes place (Frizzo & Piccinini, 2007 ). These results can be further investigated to understand the processes surrounding these aspects of paternal involvement.

Regarding gender roles, the articles analyzed demonstrate that men are required to get deeper engaged in their children's lives, as well as to share household chores due to social demands, mainly because, in general their wives also work outside the home. Thus, in relation to issues

concerning gender identity, Jablonski (2010) highlights that transformations in the performance of parenting had implications on masculine identity, including aspects related to values and beliefs. Family transformations have been generating expectations and demands from men in terms of their roles as fathers and husbands, characterizing the phenomenon called "new paternity". Although it seems evident men's growing interest in participating, this interest does not materialize with the same force, once the division of child care still seems unbalanced between men and women (Brasileiro, Jablonski, & Féres-Carneiro, 2002; Jablonski, 2010; Kamers, 2006).

In relation to the housework, the study carried out by Prado et al. (2007) points out to a contradiction in parents' perceptions: while mothers believe fathers should do more than what they assess to be their role in household chores, men believe their participation to be very close to the ideal one. Publications show that in addition to their low participation in household tasks, fathers hardly get involved in children's care, devoting their time only to games and physical play (Prado, et al., 2007). Other researches refer to greater male participation in child care than in domestic chores (Gomes & Resende, 2004). Although there had been significant changes in order to reduce the gap between men and women in regards to domestic activities, it remains a considerable gap between rhetoric and practice. Even men whose attitudes are positive towards the division of home tasks continue to adopt behaviors not consistent to such conviction (Brasileiro, et al., 2002; Jablonski, 2010; Kamers, 2006). Regarding paternal functions, there seems to be two models: one in which fathers share tasks with mothers, and another one in which mothers are the primary caregiver. Overall, studies argue that men do not see themselves only as providers, but also as responsible for raising children.

On the performance of paternal functions, researchers have concluded that although we are in a process of changes in what is expected from fathers and mothers, the figure of fathers as financial providers to the family and of mothers as emotional and affective caregivers still remain (Dessen & Braz, 2000; Trindade & Menandro, 2002). Freitas et al. (2009) argue that fathers perceive paternity as a new social role still strongly linked to the function of moral and material provision for the family, even though they have been experiencing a transition process in which coexist the traditional model of paternity and the current model that includes also the dimensions of care and affection.

The reviewed studies also suggest that paternal involvement can benefit children in emotional, behavioral and social terms. There is evidence that, especially with regards to the school performance, involved fathers contribute to children's satisfactory academic performance. These studies support international research indicating that fathers who are affectionate and able to impose rules and limits help children developing confidence that allows them to become responsible and cooperative with adults and peers in preschool, as well as developing social skills in academic school age (Paquette, Eugène, Dubeau, & Gagnon, 2009).

Although analyzed researches in this present revision show no consensus regarding the variables influencing paternity, studies indicate that fathers' personality characteristics, children's temperament, and the context may be important variables. Moreover, families' social-economic situation, fathers' educational background and can result in greater or lesser degree of paternal involvement. Reviewed studies suggest that fathers play different roles

depending on the cultural context in which they are inserted, and these roles are multidimensional and complex. Furthermore, issues related to personality traits, relationship with wives and family, as well as the social environment must be considered in understanding parental involvement (Turcotte & Gaudet, 2009).

When dealing with the perception and conception of paternal behavior, the reviewed publications indicate that fathers report being involved with their children, especially in leisure activities, and in imposing discipline. However, Goetz and Vieira (2008) found that children perceive the real father to be far from the ideal one regarding his functions of care and interaction, especially in cases where parents are separated. The authors point out that children's expectations towards their parents are a reflection of the culture in which they live. Hence, if the pattern in contemporary culture is related to a more involved and active father, then children will require these behaviors from fathers. Concerning the imposition of discipline, parents (mothers and fathers) seem to agree that fathers are important in the imposition of rules, limits and transmitting concepts on "what is right and what is wrong." Thus, fathers play an important role in relation to children's appropriate behavior in the social sphere (Goetz & Vieira, 2008).

In relation to adolescence, in this present review, researches have demonstrated that many teenage fathers report being satisfied and demonstrate responsibility for their children and partners. In terms of future studies, it is necessary to investigate more thoroughly teenagers' expectations and feelings, as well as their marital relationships and their relation with the baby (Levandowski & Piccinini, 2002, 2006).

On the other hand, fathers of disabled or hospitalized children, despite the difficulties of having a sick child, are described as deeply involved with their children. However, they describe themselves as helping mothers in child care, while women are perceived to be primary caregivers. In addition, they refer to be responsible for the family economical support. These findings show that fathers, regardless of having healthy or sick children, still position themselves in the traditional role of providers (Dessen & Lewis, 1998).

Therefore, it seems that paternity has been increasingly attracting researchers' attention, possibly because the theme is of both scientific and social relevance. Paternal participation in the family context has been increasing and this greater involvement has repercussions in family dynamics and children's development. However, due to the complexity of the theme, much still has to be done in order to build a broader and more accurate perspective on the reality of fathers in Brazil.

For instance, more studies are necessary to characterize the experiences of paternity in the context of children with disabilities, as well as possible implications of children with special needs, sex and birth order in the family organization. In addition, it is necessary to increase the amount of researches on fathers' perceptions regarding their roles. Another demand is related to the participation of fathers whose children belongs to different age groups, considering that demands of children change over time, and the specificities of paternal involvement during childhood development. In relation to participants, future research should incorporate data from other generations of participants in order to investigate the intergenerational



transmission of parenting. Other family configurations, besides father-mother families, need to be more emphasized in research, especially with regards to the role of fathers in divorced and remarried families. Moreover, the issue of co-parenting is a topic that has been gaining researchers' attention, but is still very recent in the literature. It is necessary to invest in research to identify which aspects of paternal involvement effectively indicate a co-parental relationship and the effects of this relationship to children.

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## Author details

Mauro Luís Vieira<sup>1</sup>, Maria Aparecida Crepaldi<sup>1</sup>, Carina Nunes Bossardi<sup>1</sup>,  
Lauren Beltrão Gomes<sup>1</sup>, Simone Dill Azeredo Bolze<sup>1</sup> and César-Augusto Piccinini<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Psychology Department, Federal University of Santa Catarina, Florianópolis, Brazil

<sup>2</sup> Institute of Psychology, Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, Porto Alegre, Brazil

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