

PAVIA INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH NETWORK MEETING, JUNE 24th

**CONNECT PARENT GROUP GOES TO
ITALY:
TRAINING, IMPLEMENTATION,
RESEARCH AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

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WHY CONNECT AND ECONNECT IN ITALY

CONNECT: STRENGTHS

- Able to address adolescents' problems by involving only parents
- A beneficial costs/benefits ratio
- Able to address different populations of parenting and different cultural contexts, thus being inclusive:
Replicated findings across studies and communities
- Standard of evidence fulfilled and able to show what works for whom



HOW CONNECT CAME TO ITALY AND FOR WHOM IT SHOWED TO WORK

- The start: challenges and development of implementation
- CONNECT in Italy
- eCONNECT in Italy

Studying Program Implementation Is Not Easy but It Is Essential

Joseph A. Durlak¹



Lavinia Barone Università degli Studi di Pavia

FROM CANADA TO ITALY

ITALY

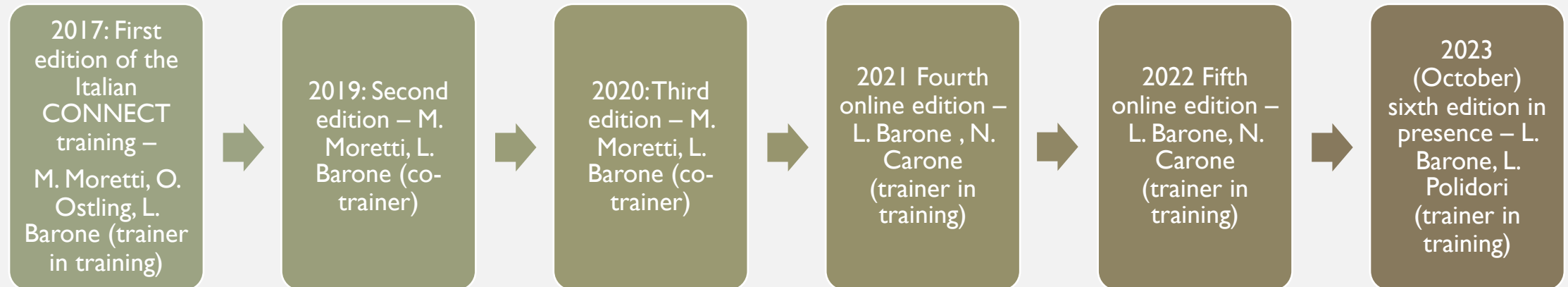
2017 first training with Marlene Moretti (37 attendees completed the full 3-day training – 58 attendees completed the 1 day workshop)

2023 7° Training Edition (Lavinia Barone)

2018 start of CONNECT RCT multisite study

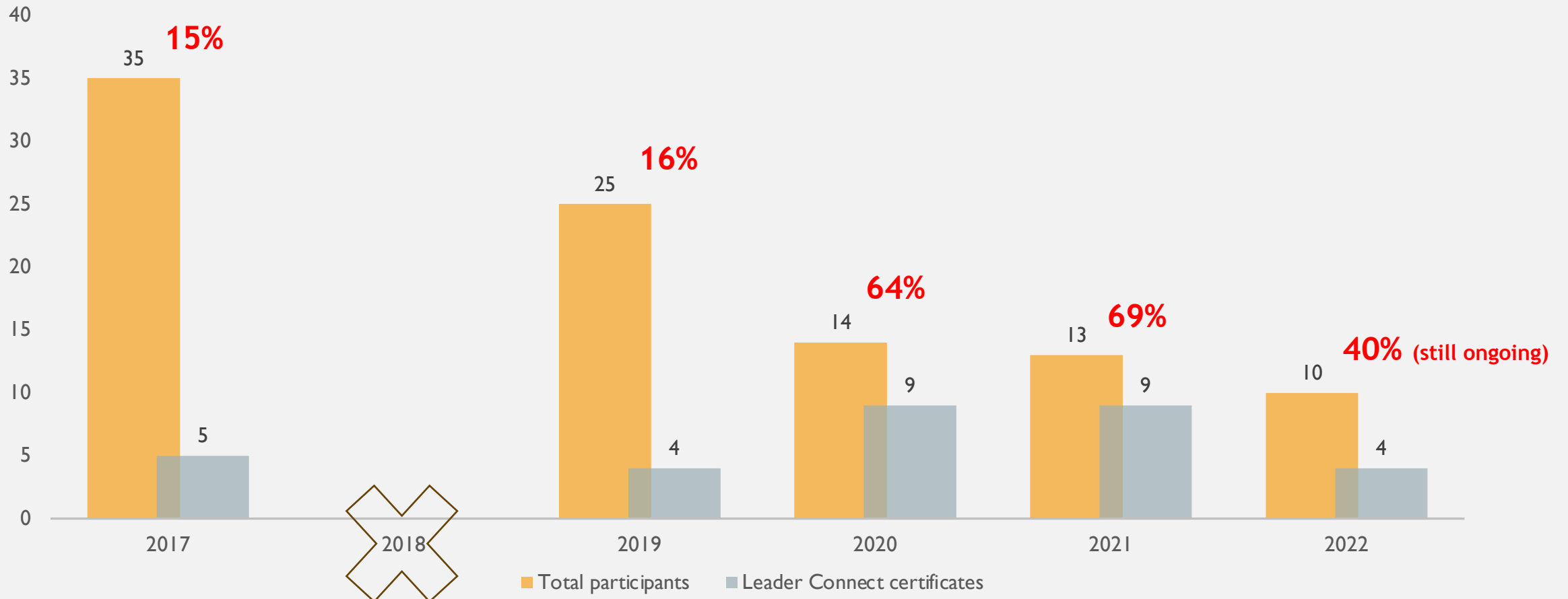
2021 start of eCONNECT multisite study

FIRST CHALLENGE: FROM TRAINING TO IMPLEMENTATION



FROM TRAINING COMPLETION TO ADHERENT IMPLEMENTATION

- Number of completed training: 5
- Number of professionals who participated: 97
- Number of professionals who have obtained CONNECT leader certification: 32 (33%)





LOMBARDIA (N =11)

- Prof.ssa Lavinia Barone, Dipartimento di SSNC, Università degli Studi di Pavia
- Dott. Nicola Carone, Dipartimento di SSNC, Università degli Studi di Pavia
 - Dott.ssa Elisa Cirioni, Vigevano
 - Dott.ssa Sara Merelli, UONPIA, Policlinico Milano
 - Dott.ssa Jennifer Genschow, UONPIA, Policlinico Milano
 - Dott.ssa Chiara Guarnieri, UONPIA, Policlinico Milano
 - Dott.ssa Antonella Auletta, Vigevano
 - Dott.ssa Valentina Ginelli, Centro Affidi di Lodi
 - Dott.ssa Lisa Trasforini, Centro Affidi di Lodi
- Dott.ssa Ilaria Elena Oltolini, UONPIA, Sesto San Giovanni, Milano
- Dott.ssa Barbara Valli, UONPIA, Sesto San Giovanni, Milano

EMILIA ROMAGNA (N =8)

- Dott.ssa Manuela Mantovan, UONPIA, AUSL Piacenza
- Dott.ssa Valeria Mariani, UONPIA, AUSL Piacenza.
- Dott. Ezechiele Giannelli, UOPP, AUSL Bologna
- Dott.ssa Alessandra Mancaruso, UOPP AUSL Bologna
 - Dott. Alessio Orlando, AUSL Ferrara
 - Dott.ssa Giulia Rossetti, AUSL Ferrara
- Dott.ssa Luisa Donnarumma, AUSL Bologna
- Dott.ssa Laura Valentini, AUSL Bologna

FRIULI VENEZIA-GIULIA (N = 1)

- Dott.ssa Lucia Culot

LIGURIA (N = 6)

- Prof.ssa Cecilia Pace, Dipartimento di Scienze della Formazione, Università degli Studi di Genova
- Dott.ssa Fabiola Bizzi, Dipartimento di Scienze della Formazione, Università degli Studi di Genova
- Dott.ssa Stefania Muzi, Dipartimento di Scienze della Formazione, Università degli Studi di Genova
- Dott. Simone Charpentier Mora, Dipartimento di Scienze della Formazione, Università degli Studi di Genova
- Dott.ssa Marta Tironi, Dipartimento di Scienze della Formazione, Università degli Studi di Genova
 - Dott.ssa Alessia Renzoni, Genova

TOSCANA (N = 2)

- Dott.ssa Lisa Polidori, IRCCS Fondazione Stella Maris, Pisa
- Dott.ssa Laura Rugliani, IRCCS Fondazione Stella Maris, Pisa

LAZIO (N =2)

- Dott. Nicola Carone, Dipartimento di SSNC, Università degli Studi di Pavia
- Dott.ssa Demetria Manzi, Dipartimento di SSNC, Università degli Studi di Pavia

PUGLIA (N = 2)

- Dott.ssa Giorgia Lettere, Lecce
- Dott.ssa Lucia Culot, Lecce

SECOND CHALLENGE RESEARCH IMPLEMENTATION

RESEARCHERS: LAVINIA BARONE, NICOLA CARONE, ILARIA BENZI,
YAGMUR OZTURK & MARLENE MORETTI
MASTER STUDENT: JACOPO TRACCEGHIANI

2018: start of the RCT
multicentric study on
CONNECT effectiveness
(co-funded by Simon Fraser
University, Marlene Moretti)



2021: start of the multicentric
study on eCONNECT
effectiveness
(co-funded by Simon Fraser
University, Marlene Moretti)

Our scientific research

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journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/adolescence



Effect of a parenting intervention on decreasing adolescents' behavioral problems via reduction in attachment insecurity: A longitudinal, multicenter, randomized controlled trial

Lavinia Barone^{a,*}, Nicola Carone^{a,1}, Antonella Costantino^b, Jennifer Genschow^b, Sara Merelli^b, Annarita Milone^c, Lisa Polidori^c, Laura Ruglioni^c, Marlene M. Moretti^d

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Addressing Parental Stress and Adolescents' Behavioral Problems through an Attachment-Based Program: An Intervention Study

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Marlene Moretti

Simon Fraser University, Canada

Lavinia Barone

Università di Pavia, Italia



International Journal of
Environmental Research
and Public Health



Article

eCONNECT Parent Group: An Online Attachment-Based Intervention to Reduce Attachment Insecurity, Behavioral Problems, and Emotional Dysregulation in Adolescence

Ilaria Maria Antonietta Benzi¹, Nicola Carone¹, Marlene Moretti², Laura Ruglioni³, Jacopo Tracchegiani¹ and Lavinia Barone^{1,*}

Training parents to adolescents' challenges: The CONNECT parent program



Lavinia Barone*, Nicola Carone*, Antonella Costantino**, Jennifer Genschow**, Sara Merelli**, Annamaria Milone***, Lisa Polidori***, Laura Ruglioni***, Marlene Moretti****

Psicologia
clinica
dello
sviluppo

AN INTERVENTION STUDY (OZTURK ET AL., 2019)

- **Longitudinal randomized control trial (RCT)**

- Connect group
- Waitlist control group

- **2 time points:**

- Pre-intervention (T1)
- Post-intervention (after the intervention)(T2)

- **Participants:**

- N = 44 parents with their adolescents (34% girls; M = 15 years)
- Intervention group N = 22 parents (19 mothers; M = 49.9 years)
- Control group N = 22 parents (14 mothers; M = 50.9 years)

- **Measures:**

- **Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ; Goodman, 1997)** to evaluate adolescents' internalizing and externalizing problems
- **Stress Index for Parents of Adolescents (SIPA; Sheras, Abidin & Konold, 1998)** to evaluate parental stress

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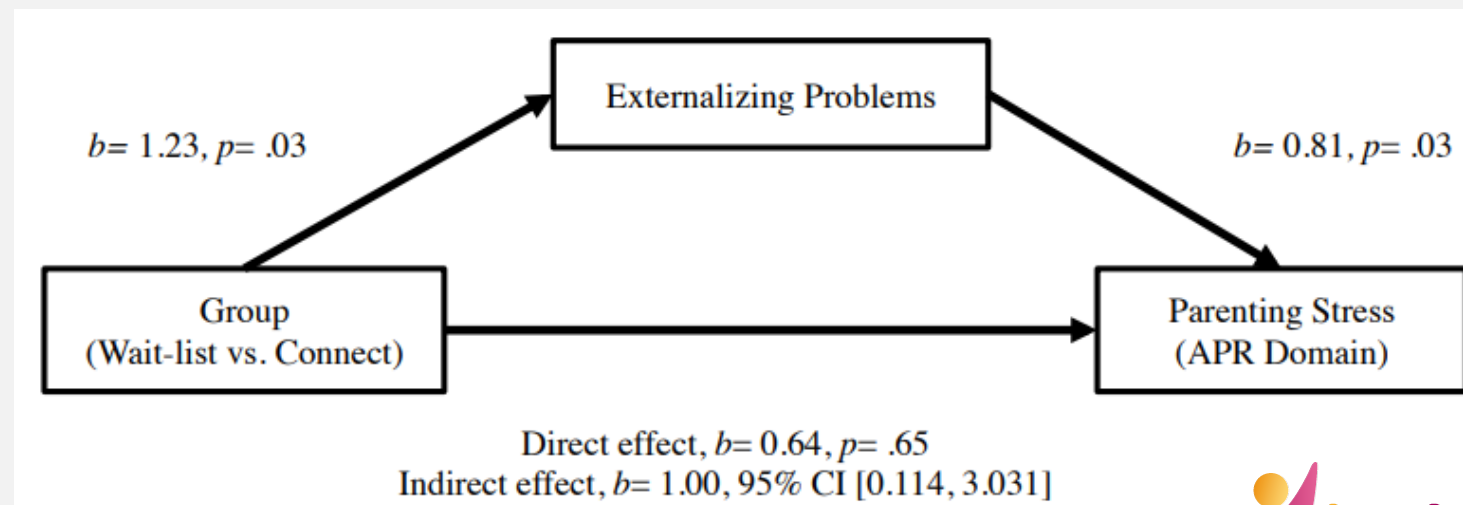
Lavinia Barone

Università di Pavia, Italia



RESULTS

- Pre-intervention (T1) and at post-intervention (T2), parents who completed Connect group reported a significant reduction in externalizing (group*time: $\eta^2_p = .18$) but not in internalizing symptoms
- In parents who attended the Connect program, adolescents showed a significant reduction in their externalizing problems ($b = 1.23, p = .03$) and, in turn, parenting stress related to the parent-teen relationship decreased ($b = 0.81, p = .03$)



2021: RCT MULTICENTRIC STUDY (BARONE *ET AL.*, 2021)

- **Longitudinal randomized control trial (RCT)**

- Connect group
- Waitlist control group

- **Italian multicenter research**

- 3 sites: Pavia, Pisa, Milan

- **3 time points:**

- Pre-intervention (T1)
- Post-intervention (2 weeks after the intervention)(T2)
- Follow-up at 4 months (T3)

- **2 studies:**

- Study 1: Use of **mothers' reports** ($n = 100$ mothers)
- Study 2: Use of both **mothers' and adolescents' reports** ($n = 40$ mothers and their 40 adolescent children)



Effect of a parenting intervention on decreasing adolescents' behavioral problems via reduction in attachment insecurity: A longitudinal, multicenter, randomized controlled trial

Lavinia Barone^{a,*}, Nicola Carone^{a,1}, Antonella Costantino^b, Jennifer Genschow^b, Sara Merelli^b, Annarita Milone^c, Lisa Polidori^c, Laura Ruglioni^c, Marlene M. Moretti^d

THE RESEARCH

2 research questions:

1. Is CONNECT effective in reducing behavioral problems (i.e., internalizing and externalizing behavioral problems) and in reducing insecure attachment (i.e., anxious and avoidant)?
2. Is attachment insecurity a mechanism of change in behavioral problems reduction?

PARTICIPANTS

STUDY 1:

- 100 mothers with adolescent children (40% female)
- Mean age of children: 14.89 years ($SD = 1.58$; age range 12-18 years)
- Mean age of mothers: 49.68 ($SD = 5.20$)
- Two-parent families, resident in Italy
- 89% Italian mothers, 87% working mothers

STUDY 2:

- 40 mother-adolescent dyads whose adolescent assessments were available (40% female)
- Mean age of children: 14.90 years ($SD = 1.91$; age range 12-18 years)
- Mean age of mothers: 48.88 ($SD = 5.30$)
- 85% Italian mothers, 82.5% working mothers

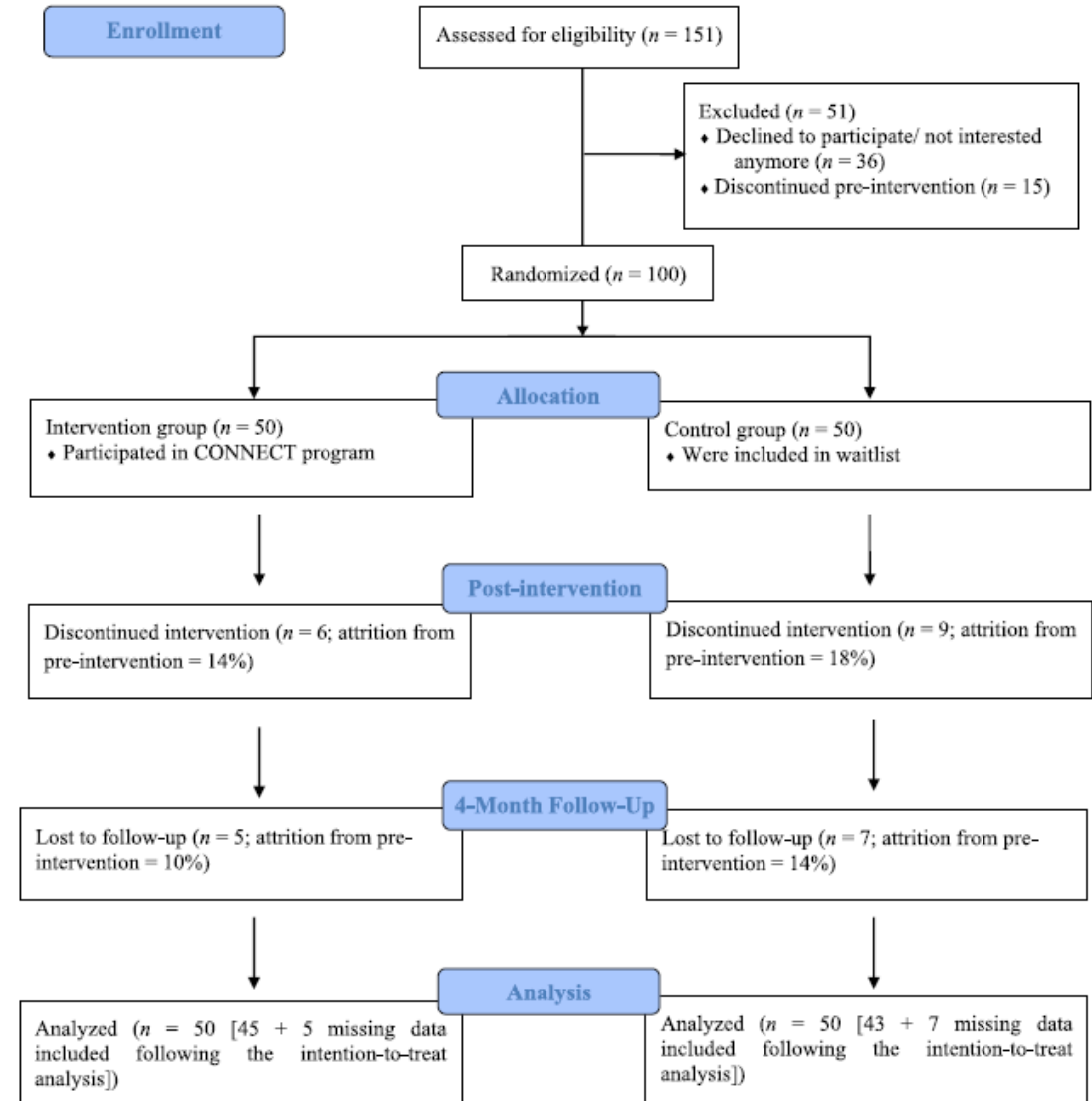
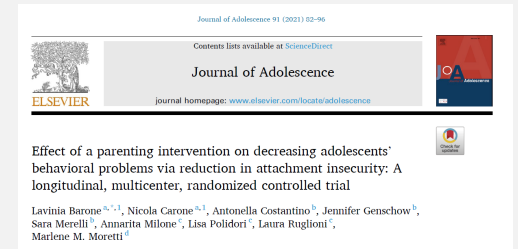


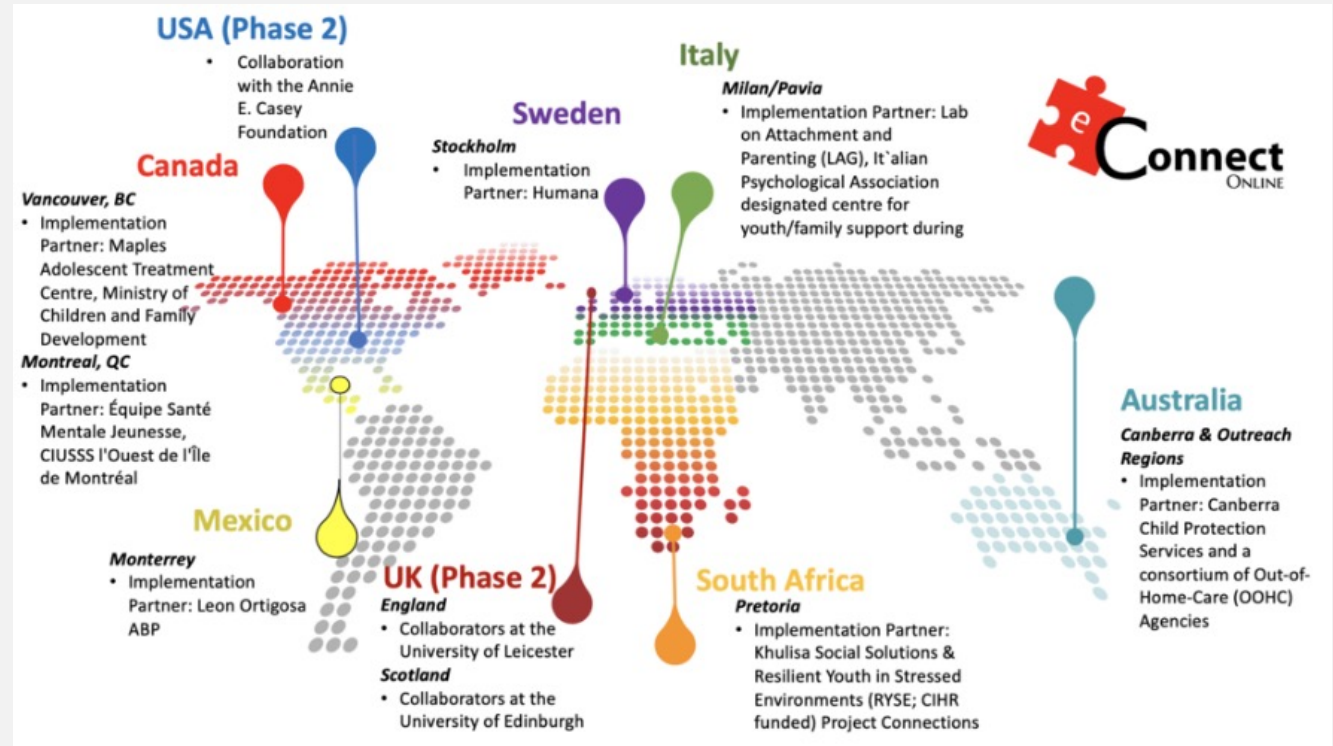
Fig. 1. CONSORT Flow Diagram for Sample (Dis)Engagement in Study 1 (N = 100).

MAIN RESULTS



- **No difference between the two groups at baseline (T1)** either in externalizing and internalizing symptoms or in avoidant and anxious attachment style
- **Post-intervention (T2) and at follow-up (T3)**, mothers who completed Connect group reported a significant reduction in externalizing (group*time: $d = .95$) and internalizing (group*time: $d = .60$) symptoms, and a reduction in avoidant (group*time: $d = .93$) and anxious (group*time: $d = 1.00$) attachment styles in their children
- **Results confirmed also in study 2**, jointly considering the assessments of mothers and their children

**ECONNECT:
A FINDINGS
REPLICATIONS
WITH POSSIBLE
DIFFERENCES TO BE
FURTHER INQUIRED**



ECONNECT RESEARCH

(BENZI ET AL., 2023; TRACCHEGIANI ET AL., IN PRESS)

- **3 time points:**

- Pre-intervention (T1)
- Post-intervention (after the intervention)(T2)
- Follow-up at two months (T3)

- **Italian multicenter research:**

- 2 sites: Pavia, Pisa

- **Participants:**

- Parents (N = 24, 83.3% mothers, M_{age} : 49.33) of adolescents (51% females, M_{age} : 13.83) were referred by local mental health centers and schools or were spontaneously approached to receive support for their children's emotional-behavioral problems

- **Measures:**

- **Brief Child and Family Phone Interview** (BCFPI; Cunningham et al., 2009) to evaluate adolescents' internalizing and externalizing problems
- **Adolescent Attachment Anxiety & Avoidance Inventory** (AAAAI; Moretti & Obsuth, 2009) to evaluate adolescents' attachment avoidance and attachment anxiety
- **Affect Regulation Checklist** (ARC; Moretti, 2003) to evaluate the parent-adolescent dyadic affective regulation relationship
- **Caregiver Strain Questionnaire** (CGSQ; Brannan et al., 1997) to evaluate caregiver strain
- **Parental Sense of Competence Scale** (PSOC; Johnston e Mash, 1989) to evaluate the sense of parenting satisfaction and efficacy

RESULTS

Outcome	Effect Size T1-T2 (η^2p)	Up to two months follow-up (T3)
Adolescents Behavioral Problems		
• Externalizing Symptoms (e.g., conduct problems)	.35	Changes remained stable
• Internalizing Symptoms (e.g., depression)	.14	Changes did not remain stable
Adolescents Attachment Insecurity		
• Anxiety	.05	-
• Avoidance	.33	Changes remained stable
Dyadic Affect Dysregulation	.25	Changes remained stable
Caregiver Strain		
• Objective Strain (i.e., dimension captured negative occurrences that resulted from caring for a child with emotional or behavioral problems)	.26	
• Subjective Internalized Strain (i.e., dimension captured feelings internalized by the caregiver that were associated with caring for a child with emotional or behavioral disturbance)	.25	All changes remained stable
• Subjective Externalized Strain (i.e., dimension related to negative feelings directed at the child)	.28	
Parental Sense of Competence		
• Satisfaction (e.g., «Sometimes I feel like I'm not getting anything done»)	.29	Changes remained stable
• Efficacy (e.g., «The problems of taking care of a child are easy to solve once you know how your actions affect your child, an understanding I have acquired»)	.07	-

THIRD CHALLENGE: SUSTAINABILITY

TO BE DISCUSSED TOGETHER

WHAT IS STILL MISSING? A DIALECTICAL VIEW ON FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- To mind the gap between trainings and implementation and sustainability policies
- Examining what works for whom: highlighting specific pathways of change (e.g., child's gender/age? differences between mothers and fathers? Differences related to maladaptive functioning severity?)
- Italian psychometric properties of AAAI to be reliably inquired
- Multi-informant data → collecting data from parents and from adolescents
- Highlighting within and between (culture) variability and **increasing the sample size by** combining all samples from the countries participating in the multicentric and multicultural research project on eCONNECT effectiveness



**A SPECIAL THANK TO THE LAB TASK FORCE ON
CONNECT**

**ILARIA BENZI
LISA POLIDORI
LAURA RUGLIONI
JACOPO TRACCHEGANI**

Challenges mostly met:

- Trainings
- Research

Challenges to be still improved

- Trainer development model
- CONNECT Implementation and sustainability

