

at a time when both are particularly primed for such a reciprocal activity.³²

64. It is therefore advisable to humanize maternal facilities and establish a hospital atmosphere which more approximates the living-in, home-like situation which is now being created in many hospitals throughout the United States and Canada.³³ In some maternity hospitals provision is made for the mother and child to occupy the same room, where the mother can give special attention to her infant immediately after birth. The beneficial effects of continued close contact between mother and infant during the hospital stay have been demonstrated.

"Mothers who experience an hour of extended full contact with their infants within the first forty-five minutes after birth are likely to display more attachment behaviour toward them at one month and three months after parturition than those who experienced routine hospital care involving separation of mother and infant within the first forty-five minutes after birth."³⁴

Mothers who decide to keep their baby by their bedside at the hospital and who experience the extra contact that this makes possible are also likely to display greater attachment to their child one month and three months after delivery.

65. If bonding does not take place between the mother and her newborn in the early hours of the infant's life, it can be established later: but what routine hospital policy has caused to be missed is a special moment in time when mother and child are particularly primed to establish contact.³⁵

66. Another aspect of bonding is that the behaviour of the mother appears to influence the infant's behaviour.³⁶ This may be a key to understanding how in some cases child abuse is forecast from the time of birth. "It is not clear what the long range consequences are for interfering with the course of a mother's natural behavioural cycle. However, some research indicates that consequences for the infant's development may be profound."³⁷ Such interference may slow the mental and motor development of the infant. "What the short and longer term emotional consequences are for mother and infant are unknown."³⁸ Future research may shed light on this question.

67. The healthy establishment of bonding in early life is one of the very important processes of nature in the growth and development of the human personality, in fact, "the capacity to establish strong interpersonal relations is the cornerstone of the personality."³⁹ One major characteristic of many pathological conditions which lead to criminal behaviour, the psychopathic personality, for instance, is the incapacity to form meaningful attachments. We cannot overemphasize the importance of giving the new mother all possible assistance to develop a deeply felt and self-confident maternal bond with her new infant.