Almost every adult age 18-49 owns a smartphone. Interviews reveal parent smartphone use (SPU) when bored, stressed, and for support. Although SPU could assist parents, it may also cause distractions and disruptions in parent-child interactions (technoference). These distractions can impact child well-being and behavior. Parent SPU is also linked with parent mood and feelings, such as depression, guilt, etc.

We examined:
1. Differences between objective and perceived SPU
2. Associations between SPU (objective & perceived) and perceptions of responsiveness to infant.

We hypothesized:
Objective use and self-reports would differ.
However, it was unclear whether objective or perceived SPU would more strongly link with daily responsiveness.

How much do parents use their smartphone around their infant?
On average, showed objective SPU during 27% of their infant time, and the average for perceptions was similar.

Do objective and perceived SPU differ?
On a daily basis, only about 50% of parents’ perceptions matched their actual SPU.

What matters more for parent daily feelings of responsiveness, objective or perceived SPU?
Utilized multilevel modeling, due to nested data across days
Controlled for parent gender, ethnicity, depression, child hours, and child stressful behavior.

Perceptions and actual SPU differed for many parents.
Even reporting at the daily level (which helps to alleviate some recall bias), only about 50% were “fairly close” in their estimates.
Perceived and actual SPU around infant did NOT predict parent feelings about their responsiveness.
Instead, on days when parents perceived greater technoference they also felt worse about their responsiveness.
Thus, assisting parents to find ways to avoid technoference may be beneficial to feelings and mood surrounding parenting.

Participants & Procedures
264 parents of an infant
76% mothers; 30.83 years (SD = 4.84)
79% Non-Hispanic Caucasian
Infant age = 6.65 months (SD = 3.50)
Median income = $70,000 (SD = $48,545)

Measures

Results

Discussion

Participants & Procedures