

ADHD, Pregnancy, and Prenatal Risk

Our research update in this issue focuses on the effects of ADHD symptoms during pregnancy and questions about prenatal risk factors for ADHD.

ADHD & PREGNANCY

How do maternal ADHD symptoms impact daily life functioning during pregnancy?

A large body of research has linked pregnancy with symptoms of anxiety and depression, and has also demonstrated that those symptoms have a negative impact on daily life functioning. This study asked whether similar relationships might occur with ADHD symptoms.

The researchers focused on 250 pregnant women and found that, within this sample, higher levels of inattention and impulsivity predicted poorer daily life functioning, including relationship and professional impairment.

This study could not answer the question of how ADHD symptoms influence daily functioning in pregnant women, nor whether such symptoms are elevated in this group. These are, however, interesting topics for future research that might provide solutions for limiting the negative impact of ADHD symptoms on day-to-day functioning during pregnancy.


Eddy, L.D., Jones, H.A., Snipes, D., Karjane, N., & Svikis, D. (2017). Associations between ADHD symptoms and occupational, interpersonal, and daily life impairments among pregnant women. *Journal of Attention Disorders*, epub ahead of print.

PRENATAL RISK

Is pre-pregnancy maternal body mass index a risk factor for ADHD?

This study built on the literature showing that elevated maternal pre-pregnancy body mass index (BMI; maternal overweight/obesity) increases the risk of having a child with ADHD.

Specifically, the researchers examined whether risk might be better explained by other familial or maternal factors using a design that examined siblings and used medical records of mothers and their offspring to address this question. The results led the investigators to conclude that it is likely not maternal BMI on its own that increases risk for ADHD, but rather other familial and/or maternal factors, each of which are independently associated with maternal BMI and child ADHD, which actually account for this relationship.

Musser, E.D., et al. (2017). Maternal prepregnancy body mass index and offspring attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder: A quasi-experimental sibling-comparison, population-based design. *Journal of Child Psychology & Psychiatry*, epub ahead of print. 

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