

The Relationship Between Prenatal Economic Strain and Infant Irritability at 6 Months of Age

Taylor Hobgood

This study examined the association between prenatal economic strain and infant irritability at 6 months of age. A sample of 156 healthy mother-infant dyads were recruited as part of the Brain and Early Experience study. Prenatal visits were conducted as the first phase of this study during mother's third trimester, and home visits were conducted when infants were 6 months of age. Economic strain was assessed via maternal self-report at the prenatal visit. At the 6 month visit, trained research assistants assessed various aspects of the home environment, including household chaos and neighborhood safety as well as infant irritability. Results showed significant associations between economic strain and household chaos and neighborhood safety. Although in this study economic strain did not predict infant irritability, we found evidence of the proposed pathway that may link these two variables, and future studies with larger sample sizes should further examine this question.