



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



T. Hobgood, C. Propper

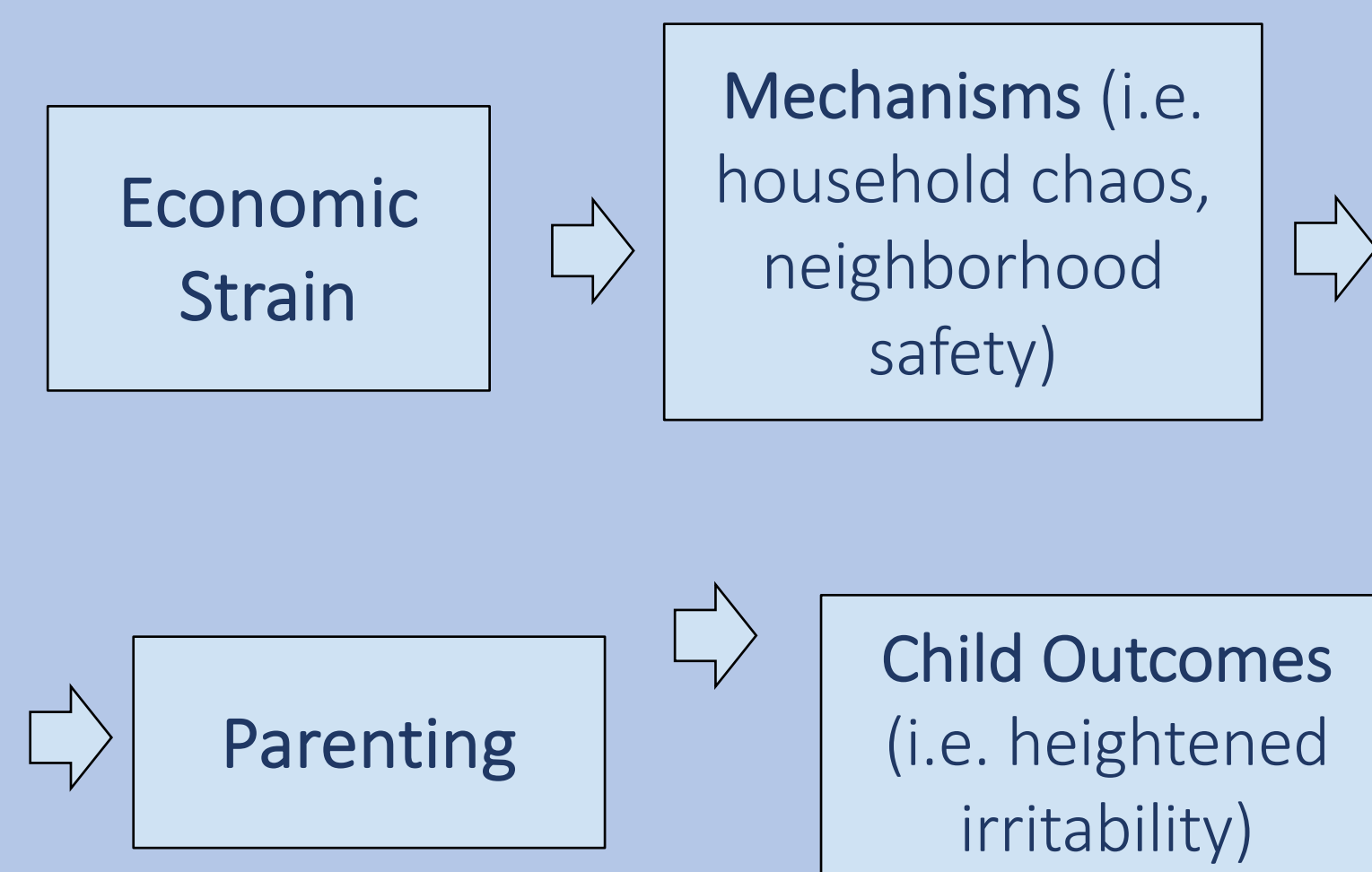
THE UNIVERSITY
of NORTH CAROLINA
at CHAPEL HILL

Department of Psychology and Neuroscience at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute

Hypotheses

- Poverty → Negative child outcomes
- Mechanisms help transmit negative effects of economic strain to child outcomes
- Hypotheses:
 - Hypothesis 1: High prenatal economic strain negatively affects infant's irritability as young as 6 months.
 - Hypothesis 2: High prenatal economic strain is associated with high household chaos and poor neighborhood safety.
 - Hypothesis 3: High household chaos and poor neighborhood safety are associated with negative infant temperament at 6 months of age.

Mechanism Model



Current Study

- Data subset of the Brain and Early Experience Study [BEE Study]
- Longitudinal study
- Recruited from the triangle area of North Carolina
- Study Participants: 156 healthy mother-infant dyads
- Prenatal visit during mother's third trimester
 - Self-report economic strain questionnaire [predictor]
- 6 month home visit when infant is 6-months-old
 - Observer Reports of:
 - Household Chaos [mechanism]
 - Neighborhood Safety [mechanism]
 - Infant Irritability [outcome variable]

Results

- No direct significant relationship between economic strain and infant irritability
- Significant associations between economic strain and household chaos and neighborhood safety
- Significant associations between household chaos and infant irritability as hypothesized

Correlation Table

Measure	Economic Strain	Irritability	Household Chaos	Neighborhood Safety
1. Economic Strain	-	.013	.405**	.533**
2. Irritability		-	-.286*	-.021
3. Household Chaos			-	.437**
4. Neighborhood Safety				-

Conclusions

- Heightened prenatal economic strain increases infant temperament through heightened household chaos as a mechanism
- Heightened household chaos has negative impacts to infant irritability
- There may be other moderating variables helping to curtail the negative effects of prenatal economic strain

Contact Information

Email: tbh28@email.unc.edu

Lab Website: <http://beelab.web.unc.edu/>