Maternal Depressive Symptoms and Toddler Outcomes in Children Born Preterm

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The study had a prospective longitudinal design. A total of 101 infants and their mothers were enrolled. In total, 38 mothers could not complete the study due to various reasons. Of the infants, 35 were born preterm, and 66 were born at term. A total of 32 participants were lost to follow-up, and 16 were excluded due to incomplete data. The remaining data was analyzed to provide a representative sample of the study population.

Table 2: Sociodemographic characteristics of the NICU discharge sample descriptive statistics (n=181).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Mean or Median</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Birthweight</td>
<td>602 – 4550 g</td>
<td>2710 g</td>
<td>405 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gestational Age</td>
<td>23 – 25 weeks</td>
<td>23 weeks</td>
<td>1.9 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>8 – 21 years</td>
<td>14 years</td>
<td>2.7 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>0 - 36 months</td>
<td>120 months</td>
<td>9.9 months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Depression relatively low

Depression decreased

Depression remained relatively low

Depression increased slightly

Depression increased substantially

The hypothesis was that children of mothers who experienced a depression trajectory were at risk for increased problems in emotion regulation. The study found that children of mothers whose depression remained relatively low or increased slightly were at lower risk for emotion regulation problems compared to children of mothers whose depression increased substantially. This finding highlights the importance of early intervention and support for mothers experiencing high levels of depression.

Results

For the latest class of mothers whose depression decreased or remained relatively low, low toddler internalizing behavior problems were predicted by maternal depression trajectories (β = 0.34, p < .05), maternal language skills (β = 0.25, p < .05), and the interaction term of maternal depression trajectories and infant prematurity (β = -0.29, p < .05). Parents who were more involved in their child’s life showed less compliance and more defiance, less optimal effortful attention skills, and lower IQ estimates.

The hypothesis was that children of mothers who had experienced either an increase or a decrease in depression levels would be at higher risk for emotion regulation problems. The study found that children of mothers whose depression had increased substantially were at higher risk for emotion regulation problems compared to children of mothers whose depression had remained relatively low or increased slightly. This finding underscores the importance of early intervention and support for mothers experiencing high levels of depression.

Conclusion

The study highlights the importance of early intervention and support for mothers experiencing high levels of depression. It also underscores the importance of addressing emotional and behavioral problems in children at risk for depression-related difficulties. Future research should focus on developing and evaluating effective interventions targeting both mothers and children to reduce the impact of maternal depression on child development.

The next step in the analysis involved modeling maternal depression trajectories in a latent class framework. The latent class model was used to identify distinct trajectories of maternal depression over time, which were then associated with different levels of toddler cognitive and socioemotional outcomes. The results showed that children of mothers whose depression decreased or remained relatively low had better cognitive and socioemotional outcomes compared to children of mothers whose depression increased substantially.

Methods

The study sample consisted of mothers and their infants who were born preterm or low birthweight and were enrolled in a prospective longitudinal study. The sample included mothers and their infants who were born at term and mothers who were born preterm or low birthweight. The study was designed to examine the relationship between maternal depression and child development.

The study had a prospective longitudinal design. A total of 101 infants and their mothers were enrolled. In total, 38 mothers could not complete the study due to various reasons. Of the infants, 35 were born preterm, and 66 were born at term. A total of 32 participants were lost to follow-up, and 16 were excluded due to incomplete data. The remaining data was analyzed to provide a representative sample of the study population.

The study was supported by grants from the National Institutes of Health, National Institute on Aging, and the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Waisman Center.

Summary

The study found that children of mothers who experienced an increase or a decrease in depression levels were at higher risk for emotion regulation problems. The results showed that children of mothers whose depression had increased substantially were at higher risk for emotion regulation problems compared to children of mothers whose depression had remained relatively low or increased slightly. This finding underscores the importance of early intervention and support for mothers experiencing high levels of depression.

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