

Postpartum Depression and the Effects on Children Ages Newborn to Three

Background

Postpartum depression can occur anywhere from 4 to 6 weeks after birth which can manifest in a depressed mood, loss of interest or pleasure in activities, sleep disturbance, appetite disturbance, loss of energy, feelings of worthlessness or guilt, diminished concentration, irritability, anxiety, and thoughts of suicide. For children from newborn to three years of age, psychosocial development, cognitive development, emotional development, language development, motor development, sleep disturbances, bonding, health, and the maternal care for a child can all be affected due to PPD. This can lead to lack of attention, less physical touch, less communication, and the child having less nutrient meals than most.

Slomian, J., Honvo, G., Emonts, P., Reginster, J.-Y., & Bruyère, O. (2019). Consequences of maternal postpartum depression: A systematic review of maternal and infant outcomes. *Women's Health, 15*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1745506519844044>

POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION FACTS



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Serenity Wellness. (2018, November 5). *Statistics about Postpartum Depression*. Serenity Recovery & Wellness. Retrieved March 25, 2022, from <https://www.serenityrv.com/statistics-about-postpartum-depression/>

Table 2. Possible Effects of Maternal Depression on Children's Behaviors*

Infant Behavioral Problems

- Sleep disruption
- Feeding/feeding disruptions
- Temper tantrums
- Fussy/crying
- Withdrawn

Delayed Cognitive Development

- Lag in developing concept of object permanence
- Lower scores on the McCarthy Scale of Children's Abilities

Impaired Social Development

- Less sociable with strangers
- Less engagement in sharing
- No fear of strangers

Insecure Attachment Patterns

- Difficulties with emotion regulation
- Difficulties being comforted
- Unusual behaviors, such as "freezing" after a separation from caregiver
- Lack of interest in age-appropriate objects
- Listlessness
- Apprehension at mother's distance
- Apprehension at mother's closeness
- Overly friendly
- Acting out to obtain a response (more than is expected for the age)
- Cessation of trying to master tasks

*This is not a complete list of behaviors, and these behaviors are not necessarily specific to the effects of postpartum depression; they may represent a host of other concerns or disorders that require further evaluation.

Chaudron, L. H. (2003). Postpartum depression: What pediatricians need to know. *Pediatrics in Review, 24*(5), 154–161. <https://doi.org/10.1542/pir.24-5-154>

Discussion

From the beginning, cognitive and language development may affect certain social and psychological deficits in school and other place by the child not speaking with women (especially adult authoritative women), dissociating, not problem-solving or falling behind in demands, and may consider being mute due to the assumption of not being heard by adults. One to three year old children have more ideas, imagination, and skills that have developed into behaviors for future use. These skills could be changed or excelled are behavior like regression or projecting anger or sadness onto others, cognitive deficits like paying less attention to toys, and the television, and decrease in memory, and language like making up new words or changing positioning of words in sentences.

Cook, N., Ayers S., & Horsch A. (2018). Maternal posttraumatic stress disorder during the perinatal period and child outcomes: A systematic review. *Journal of Affective Disorders, Volume 225*, Pages 18-31, ISSN 0165-0327. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2017.07.045>

Aoyagi, S. S., & Tsuchiya, K. J. (2019). Does maternal postpartum depression affect children's developmental outcomes? *Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology Research, 45*(9), 1809–1820. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jog.14064>

Methods

The design used was searching through online databases like PubMed to retrieve relevant information. The studies that were used were published between 2014 to 2020. Keywords used were postpartum, depression, age filters (infant, child, and preschool child), and child development like growth, height, weight, BMI, cognitive, behavioral, emotional, and speech. This study directly correlated with the theory of Erik Erikson's Theory of Development which helped in explaining milestones needed for each age group listed.

Erikson's Stages of Psychosocial Development

Stage	Psychosocial Crisis/Task	What Happens at This Stage?
1	Trust vs Mistrust	If needs are dependably met, infants develop a sense of basic trust.
2	Autonomy vs Shame/Doubt	Toddlers learn to exercise will and do things for themselves, or they doubt their abilities.
3	Initiative vs Guilt	Preschoolers learn to initiate tasks and carry out plans, or they feel guilty about efforts to be independent.
4	Industry vs Inferiority	Children learn the pleasure of applying themselves to tasks, or they feel inferior.
5	Identity vs Confusion	Teenagers work at refining a sense of self by testing roles and then integrating them to form a single identity, or they become confused about who they are.
6	Intimacy vs Isolation	Young adults struggle to form close relationships and to gain the capacity for intimate love, or they feel socially isolated.
7	Generativity vs Stagnation	The middle-aged discover a sense of contributing to the world, usually through family and work, or they may feel a lack of purpose.
8	Integrity vs Despair	When reflecting on his or her life, the older adult may feel a sense of satisfaction or failure.

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Erik Erikson's stages of Psychosocial Development. The Psychology Notes Headquarters. (2021, April 11). Retrieved March 25, 2022, from <https://www.psychologynoteshq.com/erikson-stages/>



Gangster Baby - Erikson's Stage Theory. memegenerator.net. (n.d.). Retrieved March 25, 2022, from <https://memegenerator.net/instance/36051823/gangster-baby-eriksons-stage-theory-of-development-individual-results-may-vary>