

Article: 0104

Topic: S44 - Symposium 46: Parental psychopathology and children's developmental trajectories: data from prospective cohort studies

Family Socioeconomic Position as a Moderator of the Association Between Parental Psychopathology and Children's Outcomes: Data From France

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Parental psychopathology is a known risk factor of psychological and behavioral difficulties in the offspring, however several questions regarding the nature of this relationship are yet unanswered. First, it is not clear whether the timing of parental psychopathology is relevant and particularly whether pregnancy is a period of particular vulnerability. Second, the age when the relationship between parental psychopathology and children's behavior can be observed is not yet determined. Third, the association between parental psychopathology and children's outcomes is heterogeneous, and may vary with other factors including family socioeconomic position. Based on data from the French EDEN cohort study (2000 mother-child pairs followed from pregnancy onwards, since 2004-2006), this presentation will examine the longitudinal association between maternal depression and tobacco use and children's temperament (assessed by the EAS scale at age 18 months) and psychological difficulties (assessed by the SDQ at age 3 and 5 years), as well as the moderating role of familial socioeconomic factors. Findings show that maternal tobacco use in pregnancy as well as maternal depression in pregnancy or persistent over time are associated with children's difficult temperament and behavioral difficulties (particularly symptoms of hyperactivity and inattention). Associations between maternal addictive behaviors and depression and children's outcomes may be stronger in case of family socioeconomic difficulties. These results highlight the importance of tobacco use in pregnancy and depressive symptoms that may be of subclinical level with regard to children's behavioral outcomes. The intergenerational transmission of psychopathology may be heightened in case of socioeconomic difficulties.