

# 'Pre-baby blues' due to lack of support from partner

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Pregnancy is meant to be a joyous time however some women experience overwhelming 'baby blues' before the birth of their child. Anxiety and depression during pregnancy can result in premature birth, or low birth weight, and impact the child's health even into early school years. New research published in BioMed Central's open access journal *BMC Public Health* shows that a bad relationship with their husband or partner is the strongest predictor of maternal emotional distress.

A Norwegian study involving almost 50,000 mums-to-be looked at how these women felt about their work, family or partner, and compared their bouts of illness, alcohol and smoking habits. The amount of support women received from their partners had the strongest link with mental health; those women who were most unhappy with their relationships were the most likely to be depressed.

Illness and troubles at work were also linked to prenatal [emotional distress](#) as were problems with alcohol in the preceding year. However a good relationship was a buffer against most everyday stresses. Women who were happy with their partner were better able to cope with difficulties at work, lack of money, or other stressful situations such as moving house or being ill.

While older mothers seemed to be better able to cope during pregnancy, young mums struggled more. Gun-Mette Røsand from the Norwegian Institute of Public Health said, "Failure to recognise and treat emotional distress during pregnancy stores up problems for both mother and child,

and impacts continuing family welfare. It is important that antenatal courses should include relationship classes and that close attention should be paid to women who lack the support of a good relationship."

**More information:** artner relationship satisfaction and maternal emotional distress in early pregnancy. Gun-Mette B. Røsand, Kari Slinning, Malin Eberhard-Gran, Espen Røysamb and Kristian Tambs *BMC Public Health* (in press)

Provided by BioMed Central

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