

Mediators explain paternal depression, child behavior link

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(HealthDay)—The correlation between depression in fathers in the postnatal period and subsequent child behavior is mainly mediated by the family environment, according to a study published online Jan. 5 in *Pediatrics*.

Leticia Gutierrez-Galve, Ph.D., from Imperial College London, and colleagues examined mediating and moderating factors that influence the correlation between [parental depression](#) in the postnatal period and subsequent child behavioral and emotional problems. Data were obtained from 13,822 participants in a population-based cohort, recruited during pregnancy. Child outcomes were assessed at 3.5 and at 7 years.

The researchers found that two-thirds of the overall association between

paternal depression and child outcomes at 3.5 years was mediated by [family factors](#) (maternal depression and couple conflict). When the children were 7 years old, similar findings were seen. Family factors mediated less than one-quarter of the correlation between [maternal depression](#) and child outcomes. No evidence of moderating effects was seen for parental education or antisocial traits.

"The majority of the association between depression in fathers postnatally and subsequent child behavior is explained by the mediating role of [family environment](#), whereas the association between depression in mothers and child outcomes appears to be better explained by other factors, perhaps including direct mother-infant interaction," the authors write.

More information: [Abstract](#)
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