

Parents think life quality is worse for teens and adults born very premature

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Parents of very premature babies are more worried about their grown up children's lives than mothers and fathers whose babies were born full term.

And the same new study indicates that those born very premature agree with their parents.

The analysis of their health-related quality of life was conducted by academics at the University of Warwick and University Hospital Bonn. They compared the perception of parents whose children were born very preterm with a control group born at term. They also analysed the opinions of their children. Their paper Health-Related Quality of Life Into Adulthood After Very Preterm Birth has been published in the eminent American journal *Pediatrics*.

The participants and their parents were asked when they were 13 and then as adults at age 26. The data were collected as part of the prospective Bavarian Longitudinal Study which began in Germany in 1985. In the study 260 individuals born very preterm (at 31 weeks or less) or with very [low birth weight](#) (less than 1500g) were compared to 229 who were born full term.

Nicole Baumann is the first author of the research and works with Professor Dieter Wolke at the University of Warwick's department of psychology. Ms Baumann said: "Previous work from Canada had suggested that the health-related quality of life of preterm born

individuals may decrease as they reach adulthood. However, this study found while quality of life improves for term born adults it remains lower for preterm born participants."

Professor Peter Bartmann, researcher in the department of neonatology at the University Hospital Bonn, and co-author said: "Very preterm individuals are at risk for health problems and lower health-related quality of life in childhood."

The academics looked at health-related issues such as vision, hearing, speech, emotion, dexterity and pain. They asked questions relating to these such as 'are you able to recognise a friend on the other side of the street?' and 'are you happy and interested in life?' The researchers also found that participants with lower and parent-perceived health-related quality of life had more often periods of unemployment, more often received social benefits, had fewer friends and were less likely with a partner.

There is a positive element to the study; it indicates that preterm participants don't believe that their health-related quality of [life](#) gets worse between age 13 and 26, even though their parents believe the quality does diminish, particularly in pain and emotion.

More information: *Pediatrics*, [dx.doi.org/10.1542/peds.2015-3148](https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2015-3148)

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