

# Preterm births more likely when dads live in lower income areas

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Lifelong lower socioeconomic status of fathers, as defined by early life and adulthood neighborhood income, is a newly identified risk factor for early preterm birth (at less than 34 weeks), according to a study published in *Maternal and Child Health Journal*. The rate of early

preterm births was three times higher when fathers lived in lower income neighborhoods, regardless of the mother's age, marital status, education and race or ethnicity.

"We knew that the mother's socioeconomic status is a risk factor for preterm birth, but this is the first time that the father's status is linked to prematurity, even when the mother did not have high-risk demographics," says lead author James Collins, MD, MPH, Medical Director of the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago and Professor of Pediatrics at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine. "The father's lifelong class status needs to be taken into account when designing initiatives to reduce the number of early preterm births among urban women."

For this study, Dr. Collins and colleagues analyzed the Illinois transgenerational birth file of infants (born 1989-1991) and their parents (born 1956-1976) with appended U.S. census income data.

"Our results add to the mounting evidence suggesting that socioeconomic status is one of the most important drivers of worse pregnancy outcomes in the United States, which has one of the highest rates of preterm birth among the developed countries," says Dr. Collins. "We need to address the social influencers of health for both parents in order to decrease [preterm birth](#) rates in this country."

**More information:** James W. Collins et al, Early and Late Preterm Birth Rates Among US-Born Urban Women: The Effect of Men's Lifelong Class Status, *Maternal and Child Health Journal* (2019). [DOI: 10.1007/s10995-019-02816-2](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10995-019-02816-2)

Provided by Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago

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