

# Very preterm born adults score their relationships with family and colleagues highly, but not with friends

November 9 2021

---



Credit: Pixabay/CC0 Public Domain

Very preterm and very low birth weight born adults score their relationship with friends lower than term born peers, but perceived their family and partner relationships, as well as work and educational experiences, as comparable to those of control participants, researchers from the University of Warwick have found.

Being born very [preterm](#) (before 32 weeks gestation) or very [low birth weight](#) (VLBW) (less than 1500g) has previously been associated with adverse impacts on social functioning in adulthood, however there is a lack of research on individual perceptions of social experiences and [social relationships](#) among very preterm (VP) born [adults](#) in comparison with term-born peers.

Researchers from the Department of Psychology at the University of Warwick investigated self-perceived social functioning in adults born VP or VLBW, and compared them to term born peers in their paper "Social Functioning in Adults Born Very Preterm: Individual Participant Meta-analysis," published in the journal *Pediatrics*.

Social functioning reflects an individual's interactions with human environments, and their ability to fulfill their role within environments, such as education, work, and social relationships with friends, partners, and family.

Researchers from the University of Warwick conducted a meta-analysis on two international consortia: Research on European Children and Adults born Preterm and Adults Born Preterm International Collaboration.

The study included 385 VP/VLBW adults and 900 term-born adults from 3 countries: UK, Finland and Norway. The participants completed a self-perceived social functioning assessment by using the Adult Self-Report Adaptive Functioning scales, where they rated their relationships with friends, spouse or partner, family, job, and education.

The researchers found that VP/VLBW adults scored their [relationship](#) with friends lower but perceived their family and partner relationships, as well as work and educational experiences, as comparable to those of [control participants](#).

Professor Dieter Wolke, from the Department of Psychology at the University of Warwick, says, "It reassuring, that despite their different start with often months spend in incubators VP/VLBW born adults rated their social interactions with their parents/family, spouses/partners and colleagues as highly as term born individuals. However, as previously found in childhood, VP/VLBW consider the number and relationships with friends as lower than their term born peers.

"VP/VLBW are often less outgoing and more withdrawn. Parents, schools and the work place may assist in facilitating the development of friendship relationships by providing the right opportunities."

**More information:** Yanyan Ni et al, Social Functioning in Adults Born Very Preterm: Individual Participant Meta-analysis, *Pediatrics* (2021). [DOI: 10.1542/peds.2021-051986](https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2021-051986)

Provided by University of Warwick

Citation: Very preterm born adults score their relationships with family and colleagues highly, but not with friends (2021, November 9) retrieved 12 May 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2021-11-preterm-born-adults-score-relationships.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.