

Childhood regulatory problems tied to behavioral problems in young adults

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There are long-lasting associations between multiple or persistent

regulatory problems (RPs) in childhood and behavioral problems that extend into adulthood, according to a study published online Jan. 5 in the *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*.

Dieter Wolke, Ph.D., from University of Warwick in the United Kingdom, and colleagues assessed whether RPs (excessive crying, sleeping, or feeding difficulties) that co-occur (i.e., multiple) or are persistent are associated with cognitive and behavioral problems in adulthood. The analysis included 759 children assessed for RPs at 5, 20, and 56 months, with follow-up to young adulthood.

The researchers found that [adults](#) who had early multiple or persistent RPs (151 individuals) reported more internalizing, externalizing, and total behavioral problems. Specifically, as adults, participants reported more depressive, somatic, avoidant personality, and antisocial personality problems versus people who never had RPs (596 individuals). Additionally, participants with multiple or persistent RPs were more likely to receive any attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder diagnoses, including the hyperactive/impulsive subtype. In young adulthood, there were no associations seen between multiple or persistent RPs and IQ scores.

"The results indicate long-lasting associations between multiple or persistent RPs and behavioral problems," the authors write. "Thus, screening for early RPs could help to identify children who are at risk for later [behavioral problems](#)."

More information: Dieter Wolke et al, The association of early regulatory problems with behavioral problems and cognitive functioning in adulthood: two cohorts in two countries, *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* (2023). [DOI: 10.1111/jcpp.13742](https://doi.org/10.1111/jcpp.13742)

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