

Asthma symptoms are more common in children with stressed parents, finds new research

November 13 2023



Credit: CC0 Public Domain

University of Queensland research has shown a link between parental stress stemming from financial hardship and exacerbated asthma symptoms in children.

Dr. K. M. Shahunja from UQ's Poche Centre for Indigenous Health led a study that analyzed the data of more than 3,900 children collected over 14 years in the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children. The work is published in [*Pediatric Pulmonology*](#).

"We examined the relationship between psychosocial factors such as maternal depression, financial hardship, stressful life events, and parental availability and the occurrence of wheezing as a symptom of asthma," Dr. Shahunja said. "We compared children who experienced wheezing during their childhood with those who didn't have it recorded in their medical history.

"Children with parents experiencing moderate to increasing levels of stress were found to be 77 percent more likely to have elevated rates of wheezing, compared to those who encountered fewer stressful events. Children exposed to moderate levels of maternal depression had a 55 percent higher likelihood of experiencing elevated rates of wheezing, and children with parents facing moderate financial hardship had a 40 percent increased risk of experiencing this respiratory issue."

"While previous research has shown general [parental stress](#) can trigger their child's asthma, this is the first time we've linked a parent's depression and financial stress to increased asthma symptoms throughout childhood," Dr. Shahunja continued.

Dr. Shahunja said the study was the first in Australia to look at the association of [psychosocial factors](#) with asthma symptoms through longitudinal analyses of one- to 15-year-olds.

"People are generally aware that environmental factors like smoking, traffic pollution and allergens can trigger asthma symptoms, but perhaps don't realize psychosocial stressors can also have a harmful effect," Dr. Shahunja said. "It's important parents and [health professionals](#) understand the significant influence the psychosocial environment has on children and how stressors can exacerbate [asthma symptoms](#)."

"Further research is needed to develop effective strategies to address [maternal depression](#), [financial hardship](#), and parental stress for long-term asthma control in children."

More information: K. M. Shahunja et al, Trajectories of psychosocial environmental factors and their associations with asthma symptom trajectories among children in Australia, *Pediatric Pulmonology* (2023). [DOI: 10.1002/ppul.26733](https://doi.org/10.1002/ppul.26733)

Provided by University of Queensland

Citation: Asthma symptoms are more common in children with stressed parents, finds new research (2023, November 13) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2023-11-asthma-symptoms-common-children-stressed.html>

<p>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.</p>
--