Mothers' mental health may affect twins' and singletons' touch and movement during pregnancy

9 June 2021

New research published in *Acta Paediatrica* suggests that a pregnant woman's mental health may impact the touch behavior of twins and singletons during pregnancy, and in the case of twins, how frequently they touch themselves and each other. Such touch behavior might be a soothing mechanism for fetuses when mothers are stressed or depressed during their pregnancy.

The study, which was based on ultrasound scans in 30 pregnant women, also found that maternal depression and stress affected the touch and movement behaviors of both singletons and twins, but with differences between the two.

"We already know that maternal mental health, specifically stress and depression, has an effect on fetal development. The findings from this pilot study offer a fascinating insight into the prenatal experience," said lead author Nadja Reissland, DPhil, of Durham University, in the UK. "More research needs to be done to create a toolkit of resources that will allow obstetricians, midwives, and mental health professionals to better support women throughout their pregnancies with care targeted at their healthcare needs."


Provided by Wiley