

# Mediators explain paternal depression, child behavior link

5 January 2015



depression in fathers postnatally and subsequent child behavior is explained by the mediating role of [family environment](#), whereas the association between depression in mothers and child outcomes appears to be better explained by other factors, perhaps including direct mother-infant interaction," the authors write.

**More information:** [Abstract](#)  
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(HealthDay)—The correlation between depression in fathers in the postnatal period and subsequent child behavior is mainly mediated by the family environment, according to a study published online Jan. 5 in *Pediatrics*.

Leticia Gutierrez-Galve, Ph.D., from Imperial College London, and colleagues examined mediating and moderating factors that influence the correlation between [parental depression](#) in the postnatal period and subsequent child behavioral and emotional problems. Data were obtained from 13,822 participants in a population-based cohort, recruited during pregnancy. Child outcomes were assessed at 3.5 and at 7 years.

The researchers found that two-thirds of the overall association between paternal depression and child outcomes at 3.5 years was mediated by [family factors](#) (maternal depression and couple conflict). When the children were 7 years old, similar findings were seen. Family factors mediated less than one-quarter of the correlation between [maternal depression](#) and child outcomes. No evidence of moderating effects was seen for parental education or antisocial traits.

"The majority of the association between

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