Maternal Stress and Its Effects in Human Pregnancy

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LBW and PTB responsible for 30,000 neonatal deaths in the US each year

Consequences to Survivors:  Respiratory illnesses; Neurodevelopmental problems; Cognitive deficits; Increased risk of hypertension, Type II diabetes, CHD...
Defining Prenatal Maternal Stress

Stress Effects on Birth Outcome

Adapted from Lobel et al., *Health Psychology*, 1992

- Stress
- Birthweight: -.18
- Gestational Age: -.25
  - Medical Risk: -.23

- Effect of Stress on Birthweight: .55
From Lobel et al., *Health Psychology*, 2008
Stress Effects on Delivery Method

Stress, Optimism and Birth Outcomes

From Lobel et al., Health Psychology, 2000
Preterm Birth Risk: IPV and Stress

- No abuse, low stress: 63.7% Case, 69.5% Control
- No abuse, high stress: 25.7% Case, 21.5% Control
- Abuse, low stress: 3.7% Case, 5.3% Control
- Abuse, high stress: 7.0% Case, 3.7% Control

Relative Risk:
- No abuse, low stress: 1.0 (ref)
- No abuse, high stress: 1.3 (1.1-1.6)
- Abuse, low stress: 0.8 (0.5-1.2)
- Abuse, high stress: 2.0 (1.4-3.0)

Saftlas & Lobel, unpublished
Black or Latina (1) vs. White (0)

Schedule of Sexist Events

Race-Related Stress

Pregnancy-Specific Stress

Gendered Racism - General

Gendered Racism - Pregnancy-Specific

.91**

.08

.27*

.47**

.07

.12

.23*

.26*

.08

.07

.12

.23*

.26*

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

Rosenthal & Lobel, 2015