

The Impact of Parental Mental Health on Developmental Outcomes in Children 0 to 24 Months: A Scoping Review

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Objective:

Postpartum depression is a severe mood disorder that affects 1 in 7 mothers within the first year after childbirth (Carlson et al., 2024). According to the CDC, 1 in 6 children have a developmental disability in the United States (CDC, 2024; Zablotsky et al., 2019). Given the rising prevalence of mental health challenges among parents and the growing incidence of developmental disabilities in children, we aim to investigate how parental mental illness impacts children's motor development. Current research indicates a connection to parental mental health and delayed social-emotional development of children (Giles et al., 2011). There are gaps in the literature regarding the relationship between motor development and parental mental health. This scoping review aims to investigate this relationship to better support families in our practice and help to foster positive relationships and outcomes for the child's success.

Methods:

A scoping review was conducted using PubMed, PsychINFO, and Google Scholar databases. The databases were searched using the terms "parent mental health," "motor development," "disability," "maternal depression," and "developmental delay." The initial search provided 36 articles and 11 were excluded as they did not fit into our inclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria were: children 0-24 months, motor development, parent mental health, and disability. After each article was critically appraised using an evidence matrix table, 13 articles were excluded due to not addressing the research question.

Results:

12 articles of multiple designs were included upon meeting the inclusion criteria, consisting of cross-sectional studies, longitudinal and cohort studies, prospective and pilot studies, and a systematic review. 10 studies found that the presence of parental mental health disorders was associated with delayed gross motor and fine motor development. Most studies only focused on maternal health, with a few including both parents. Multiple diagnoses were found to be associated, including depression, anxiety, schizophrenia, mood disorders, and post-partum stress.

Conclusion:

Maternal mental health conditions, specifically depression, showed a significant correlation with delayed gross and fine motor in infants aged 0-24 months. Depression was the most common mental health disorder that negatively impacted children's development. Maternal

mental health support both prenatally and postnatally is important for optimal child development and should be considered by providers. Several factors, like low socioeconomic status (SES) could also contribute to motor delay in children and represent direction for future research. Further research is required to show a causal relationship between parental mental health and motor development outcomes.

References:

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