

[Curr Psychiatry Rep.](#) 2016 Mar;18(3):24. doi: 10.1007/s11920-016-0660-y.

**Maternal Affective Illness in the Perinatal Period and Child Development: Findings on Developmental Timing, Mechanisms, and Intervention.**

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**Abstract**

Maternal mental illness is one of the most reliable risks for clinically significant child adjustment difficulties. The research literature in this area is very large and broad and dates back decades. In this review, we consider recent research findings on maternal mental illness and child development by focusing particularly on affective illness the perinatal period. We do this because maternal affective illness in the perinatal period is common; recent evidence suggests that pre- and postpartum maternal depression may have lasting effects on child behavioral and somatic health; research in the perinatal period raises acute and compelling questions about mechanisms of transmission and effect; and perinatal-focused interventions may offer distinct advantages for benefitting mother and child and gaining insights into developmental mechanisms. Throughout the review, we attend to the increasing integration of psychological and biological models and the trans-disciplinary approach now required for clinical investigation.

**KEYWORDS:**

Child development; Developmental programming; Mood disorder; Perinatal