Parenting Stress Depression and Child Development in Minority Adolescent Mothers

Posted on September 19, 2019

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Culture, Adolescent Motherhood, and Parenting Stress

Culture plays a vital role in shaping human behaviour. It influences the brain functioning of a person and shapes the way an individual behaves. In the article under study, the authors describe that the frequency of African American adolescent girls becoming pregnant is greater than that of White adolescents, and when adolescent African American women become pregnant, they face more stress as compared to their white peers. It is because of the cultural differences between the two.

They further add that there are many factors that contribute to this situation and discuss the effects of this experience of becoming pregnant at such an age. They describe that the probability of adverse development increases in these cases as the mothers are vulnerable to many issues. The effects also include depression and dropping out of school. However, the economic disadvantage is above all. Finally, the authors aim to examine the influence of an adolescent mother's parenting stress and the perceived social support as cultural aspects in the African American environment that result in maternal depression and infant development.

Further, there is a notion that adolescents who experience pregnancies for the first time experience additional stress. They are more prone to negative emotions when they are associated with this experience (Hans and Thullen 2009). Such a type of exposure may result in the unhealthy development of their children. These children may face higher risks of adverse development where developmental delays and other social and emotional problems may create problems for them in the future (Lanzi et al. 2009). These high levels of risk also contain the tendency to lead the child towards death at an early age of development, which is mostly in the first year of life (Coley 1998). Thus, for this reason, the author considers it essential to talk about this issue. Also, the social environment that incorporates these factors causes hindrance to development and can affect brain functioning in various ways; stress and depression are the most common results.

Maternal Health, Research Design, and Intervention Groups

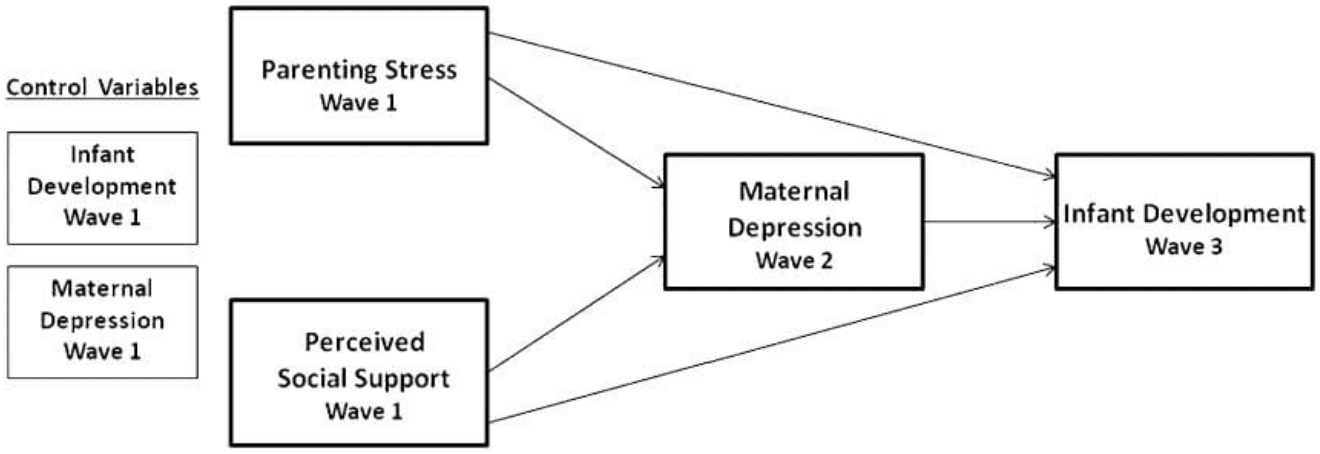
The research studies suggest that there are some health issues that adolescent parents face; they have different health needs, and young parents require significant support over the parenting role they are expected to play before and after giving birth to their infants. Also, the areas where more care is needed must be taken into consideration by paediatricians, such as maternal nutrition, infant growth, and emotional health as well. The adolescent poses a unique challenge to the healthcare providers. They have their own health needs, and their infants require a sensitive level of treatment as well. Further, the additional education along with the necessary level of support around them to take care of their infant is also essential. First-time adolescent mothers need to adapt themselves to their new roles. During this phase, the postpartum period, which remains 4 to 6 weeks, is of immense importance. Finally, adolescent pregnancies and parenting issues are becoming a significant public health problem, as the Association of Women's Health Obstetric (1998) suggests that adolescent pregnancies compound the problems.

To address the dimension that has been taken in this article, Cindy Y. Huang, Jessica Esteines, Joy S. Kaufman, and Baseline Ayala contributed their efforts so that the experiment they had undertaken would have been in a position to provide increased accuracy. The thesis statement of this article talks about the ethnic minority that includes African American and Latina adolescents and checks the effect of parenting stress and social support and its impact on the development of an infant. The factors considered in this article are shaped by the culture of a society. The intensity depends on the culture of the society and the way it takes the matter and responds to it. The negative outcomes resulting after exploring the situation of these adolescents in the African American environment reflect the negativities posed by the culture over these individuals that not only harm the mothers but cause the adverse development of the infant as well. To find the results, the authors interviewed 180 adolescent mothers belonging to the ethnicities mentioned as their target audience, including African Americans and Latinos living in urban areas in the Northeast. The authors further determined the potential differences that could have been found within the variables under study while experimenting with their propositions between the control group and the other.

The experiment included two groups. One was the intervention group of adolescent mothers who were financially disadvantaged, and these were recruited through their schools and were matched by a comparison group based on multiple factors such as age, ethnicity, etc. The group was taken as a control group. The study also analyzed the variables of interest so that it could determine the potential difference between these two groups. However, no difference was found in both cases as depression, parental stress, and the lack of perceived social support have the same effects on both types of groups; thus, both groups were combined to analyze the variables of interest.

Measurement, Social Support, and Child Development Outcomes

To measure the stress of the participants, a 36-item measure was used. This measure was a Parenting Stress Index-Short Form. The index included a Likert scale to gauge the responses of the participants. The data regarding all the variables was collected. The variable of perceived social support was also measured through a multidimensional scale, which is used to measure perceived social support. It is a 12-item measure that assesses the variables on three levels, including friends, family, and significant others. Participants were evaluated on this variable at all levels, and global support was also assessed. Further, maternal depression was assessed by using the survey provided by Reynolds' Adolescent Depression survey (Reynolds 2002). This instrument helped the authors determine the level of severity of depression symptoms in adolescents.



The theoretical framework developed by the authors to present the relationship of variables under study provides a vivid picture and the theme of this article. The theoretical framework further suggests that the parenting stress of the adolescent mothers and the perceived social support given to them relates to maternal depression at six months and also infant development at year one if the infant development and the maternal depression are controlled at the baseline. It is essential to understand the theoretical framework to understand the proposition of the authors in the article and to match the results obtained after analyzing the data so that it could be inferred whether the hypothesis made is accepted or rejected. Moreover, the results suggested that adolescent mothers who experienced a high level of parenting stress and low levels of perceived social support had suffered high levels of maternal depression, which remained after the six-month follow-up. The results also affirmed that such maternal depression also caused developmental delays in infants as well.

Finally, the results suggested that social support plays a pivotal role in a child's development, and it is not necessary for the adolescent to only get help from her parents. The authors prove this proposition by providing an experimental analysis, and the results verify the hypothesis that is being built by the authors. The argument made by the author is compelling because it is of immense importance in the

lives of mothers. There are various studies that discuss the same notion in different dimensions, and the idea of the author, along with the methodology used to analyze the impact on both factors—the maternal stress level before and its effects on child development along with the role of perceived social support—provides us with a comprehensive analysis and understanding of these factors. The authors have analyzed these notions on all the possible levels to cover them more closely and to find out closer to real results. The scales used for measuring the variables of interest were also sound and practical. Finally, it can be inferred that the attitude embedded in the culture of African American people fueled by the economic disadvantage they have over their White peers causes these adverse outcomes. Thus, to rectify the situation, the beliefs need alteration, and an opposite shift in the prevailing practices is required.

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