

The Legacy of Hardship: Mothers to Babies

IPR-led study suggests a mother's childhood disadvantage might be transmitted to her baby in utero.

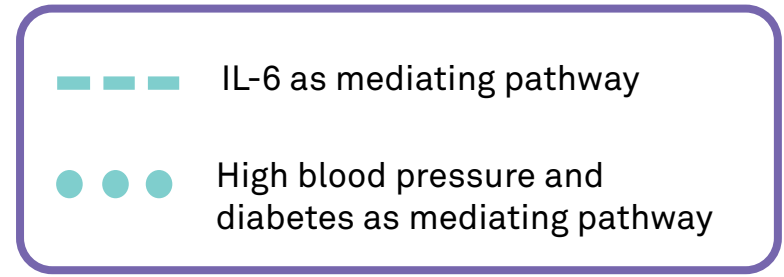
In a study of 673 recent mothers from a range of socioeconomic backgrounds, an IPR-led research team found mothers who grew up in poor homes had, on average, more premature babies with more serious health issues than babies born to mothers with more financially secure childhoods. After investigating multiple pathways, the researchers identified that a marker of inflammation (IL-6), low levels of education, and pregnancy complications could help explain how a mother's disadvantage as a child is transmitted to the next generation.

Infants whose mothers grew up more disadvantaged, compared with those with mothers who had no hardships...

were **2.7** times more likely to be born prematurely

were **1.9** times more likely to be in the **bottom 10th percentile** for birth weight

spent **4.6** more days in the hospital



Source: Miller, Gregory, J. Culhane, W. Grobman, H. Simhan, D. Williamson, E. Adam ... T. McDade, P. Wadhwa, A. Borders. 2017. Mothers' childhood hardship forecasts adverse pregnancy outcomes: Role of inflammatory, lifestyle, and psychosocial pathways. *Brain, Behavior, and Immunity* 65: 11–19.