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Psychosocial factors as predictors of low birth weight and preterm delivery. Abstract

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Published in:
Psychosomatic Medicine

Publication date:
1996

[Link to publication in Tilburg University Research Portal](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Paarlberg, K. M., Vingerhoets, A. J. J. M., Passchier, J., Heinen, A. G. J. J., Dekker, G. A., & van Geijn, H. P. (1996). Psychosocial factors as predictors of low birth weight and preterm delivery. Abstract. *Psychosomatic Medicine*, (58), 87-87.

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ABSTRACTS

PSYCHOSOCIAL FACTORS AS PREDICTORS OF LOW BIRTH WEIGHT AND PRETERM DELIVERY, K.M. Paarlberg MD, A.J.J.M. Vingerhoets PhD, J. Passchier PhD, G.A. Dekker MD PhD, A.G.J.J. Heinen PhD, H.P. van Geijn MD PhD, Dept. of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Free University Hospital, Amsterdam; Dept. of Psychology, Tilburg University, The Netherlands.

The aim of this study was to examine the influence of psychosocial factors on low birth weight and preterm delivery in a prospective design. In each gestational trimester, 396 nulliparous women completed the following questionnaires: background variables, daily stressors, psychological and mental well-being, social support, and work factors. Outcome measures were: dichotomized birth weight (BW) (BW \leq 10th percentile versus $>$ 10th percentile) and dichotomized gestational age (GA) (GA \leq 37 weeks versus GA $>$ 37 weeks). Data were analysed applying multivariate logistic regression. Results were expressed in odds ratio's (OR) and their 95% confidence intervals (CI). Independent of maternal pre-pregnancy weight, height, socioeconomic status and smoking, risk of low birth weight was significantly increased by the number of hours housekeeping (OR 1.54; 95% CI 1.04-2.29), and frequency of self-reported daily stressors (OR 1.03; 95% CI 1.00-1.06). Risk of preterm delivery was significantly increased by depressive mood in the first (OR 1.06; 95% CI 1.00-1.13) and the third trimester (OR 1.13; 95% CI 1.04-1.24), anxiety in the second trimester (OR 1.28; 95% CI 1.04-1.57), and lower somatic complaints in the third trimester (OR 0.76; 95% CI 0.61-0.96). Housekeeping in the first trimester thus was the most pronounced predictor of low birth weight. Psychological factors appear to have more influence on preterm delivery than on low birth weight.