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The expected child versus the actual child: implications for the mother–baby bond

H. Pearce & S. Ayers

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to examine whether women's perceptions of their infant remain stable between late pregnancy and the early postnatal period, and to examine the effect of women's expectations and evaluations of their infant on the mother–baby bond. Participants completed questionnaires at 39 weeks gestation and 3 weeks after birth. Questionnaires measured demographic details, expected/actual infant characteristics, symptoms of anxiety and depression and the mother–baby bond (postpar…een expectat…ore adaptab… baby and evalu…omen who expec…ted them, similarly …xiety and depressi…he postnatal mother–…ion were

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also examined. The results are discussed, suggesting that a subgroup of women who have negative perceptions of their infant before and after birth may be at risk of mother–infant attachment problems and long-term mother–infant difficulties.

Notes

ns = nonsignificant.

Possible range: Fussy 9–63; Unadaptable 5–35; Dull 4–28; Unpredictable 5–35; Total 23–161.

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