INFLUENCE OF MATERNAL EDUCATION ON PRENATAL PARENTING: INITIAL FINDINGS OF COHORT ‘18

Kopcsó K.1,2, Szabó L.1

1 Hungarian Demographic Research Institute, Budapest, Hungary
2 University of Pécs, Institute of Psychology, Pécs, Hungary

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Background and aims: Prenatal parenting includes parental bonding with the fetus, as well as the parents’ emotional well-being and risk behaviors during pregnancy. The aim of the present analysis was to assess the associations between prenatal parenting and the level of maternal completed education, using the preliminary, unweighted database of Cohort ‘18 - Growing Up in Hungary. Methods: Questionnaire data from 4704 pregnant women in the third trimester of their pregnancy were analysed. Cohort ‘18 is a countrywide and representative prospective birth cohort study. In its first wave, data is collected from pregnant women, whose child is expected to be born between April 1, 2018 and March 31, 2019. Present analysis excluded participants under the age of 18, thus participants’ mean age was 30.69 (SD = 5.79). Results: 28.9% of participants had low level of education, 36.4% had medium level of education and 34.7% had high level of education. Pregnant women with low level of education reported significantly higher rates of prenatal depression, generalized anxiety, pregnancy-related anxiety and prevalence of smoking than others, along with less healthful dietary practices and lower levels of prenatal attachment. Women with medium level of education reported higher level of risk factors than women with high level of education, except on the Maternal-Fetal Attachment Scale, which score was the highest among them. Overall, weak to moderate correlations were found between prenatal depression and anxiety problems, which were slightly correlated to the reported risk behaviors. Conclusions: Results suggest that education level plays an important role in the maternal well-being and health behavior during pregnancy.