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***An Exploratory Study of the Modeling Role of Parenting on Socioeconomic Disparities and Infants***

This investigation used ECLS-B data to examine mechanisms by which SES may influence infant health. Based on the Family Stress Model, (FSM) we used Path Modeling to examine psychological and family level variables such as parental depressed mood, relationship conflict, and parenting behaviors as potential mediators of the direct effects of SES on infant health.

Using 9-month predictors and 24-month child health outcomes, we ran four SEM path models. The first model examined the effects of SES on child health (INFHLTH) through observed parenting (NCATSP). We next added maternal depression (PDEP) and relationship conflict (CONFL) to this model separately in the second and third models. We then entered both PDEP and CONFL to the base model together.

Findings reveal modest direct and indirect effects of SES on infants' health at 9 and 24 months. Effects of SES on NCATS-P were moderate and positive. CONFL and PDEP each had modest direct mediational effects on INFHLTH. However, the mediational role of parenting was indirect and modest. Future waves of the ECLS-B may offer an opportunity to examine origins of SES disparities in child health over time to conduct a more comprehensive test of the FSM using latent variables.