

Pregnancy During the Pandemic: Relationship between prenatal anxiety, depression, and infant temperament

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INTRODUCTION

Prevalence of
Prenatal
Depression

33.4%

COVID-19 has created stress regarding health, safety, finances, and lack of in-person social interaction and pregnant women are particularly affected.

Out of a sample of ~9500 participants, 33.4% reported clinically elevated levels of depression and 39.3% reported elevated levels of anxiety.

Prevalence of
Prenatal
Anxiety

39.3%

Infant temperament is an important predictor of developmental psychopathology and is noted as one of the earliest indicators of child mental health.

OBJECTIVE

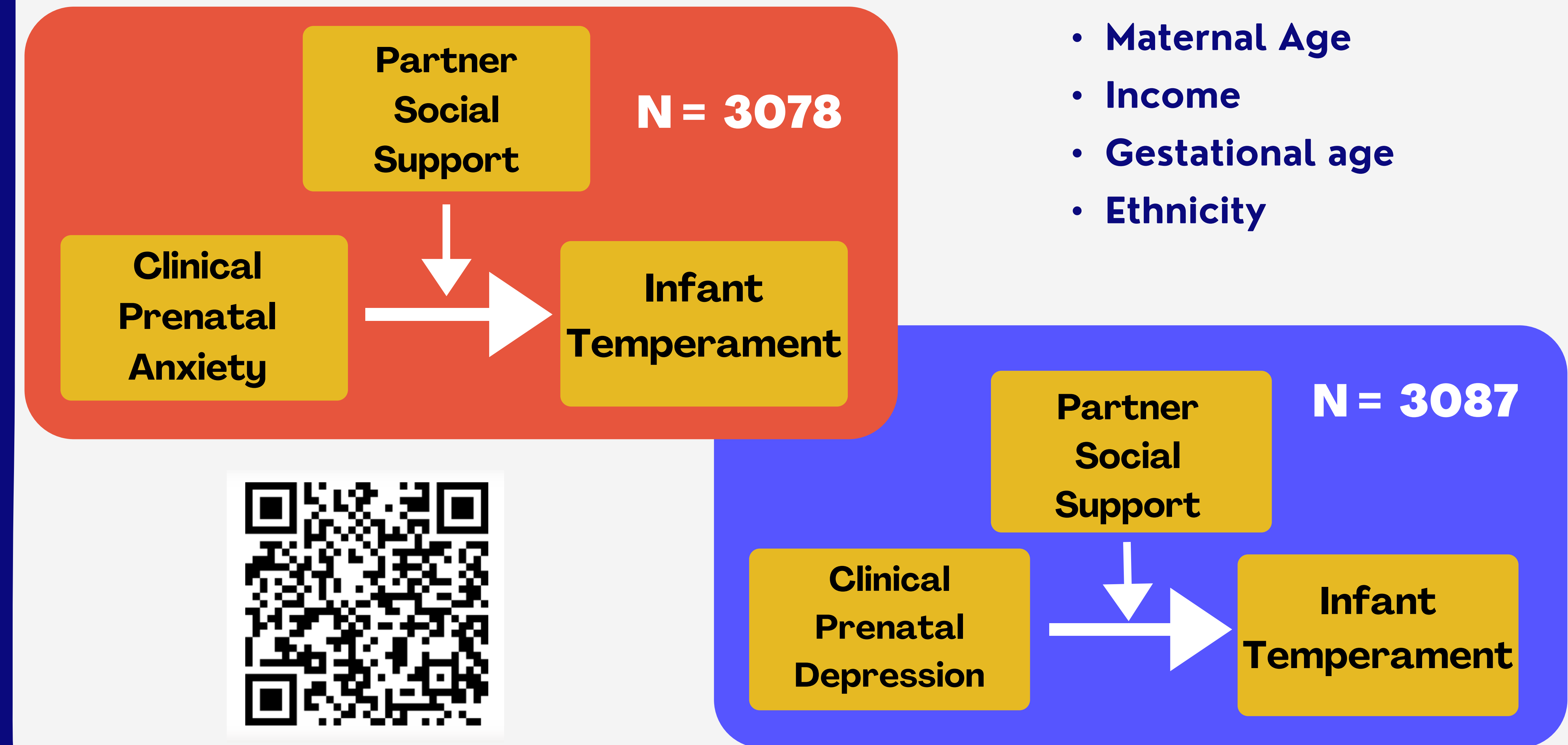
To investigate whether the relationship between prenatal mental health and infant temperament is moderated by the presence of positive support systems.

METHODOLOGY

~3080 pregnant participants were recruited across Canada to complete an online survey asking questions about mental health, pregnancy, and sociodemographic variables during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- SPSS and PROCESS were used to conduct two simple moderation analyses to see whether the relationship between maternal mental health (anxiety and depression) and negative infant temperament when moderated by partner social support. A multiple regression analysis was also completed to assess the relationships between mental health, social support, covariates, and infant temperament. Missing data was handled using listwise deletion.

MAIN ANALYSIS



Covariates

- Maternal Age
- Income
- Gestational age
- Ethnicity

RESULTS/FINDINGS

- 1) Higher reported partner social support was associated with lower levels of negative infant temperament at 6 months postpartum.
- 2) Higher symptoms of prenatal depression (but not anxiety) were associated with higher ratings of negative infant temperament.
- 3) There was no evidence that partner social support moderated the relationship between prenatal mental health concerns (anxiety/depression) and negative infant negative temperament.

CONCLUSION

Partner support may not have significantly moderated the relationship between maternal mental health and negative infant temperament because maternal mental health was much higher in the context of COVID-19 leaving partner support unable to buffer it. Regardless of maternal mental health concerns, high levels of partner social support may act as a protective factor against negative infant temperament.



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