Neighbourhood characteristics, lifestyle factors, and child development.

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Background:
- Neighbourhood characteristics, including population density, access to green space, noise and air pollution, crime and violence, neighbourhood stability, and community wealth, impact child development.
- Children in disadvantaged neighbourhoods are at higher odds of experiencing obesity, having poor peer relations, lower cognitive development, and mental health concerns that impact health into adulthood.
- Child development, including motor skills and vocabulary, is impacted by physical activity, parent-child reading, and community resource use (e.g., gyms, libraries, parenting groups).

Study Goal: to determine to what extent neighbourhood characteristics during pregnancy are associated with child development at age 5, and how lifestyle factors including physical activity and parent-child reading may impact this association.

Key Methods:
- Women with a singleton pregnancy (N=2444, age 26-35 years) completed self-report questionnaires at <25 weeks gestation, 4 months, 3 years and 5 years postpartum (All Our Families Study Cohort).
- Neighbourhood deprivation used postal codes from early pregnancy to determine community socioeconomic status, and neighbourhood disorder used community crime reports (e.g., noise, threats, robbery).
- Child outcomes included 3 or more hours of daily physical activity at age 3, 20 minutes or more of daily parent-child reading at age 3, and child development at age 5 (Ages and Stages Questionnaire).
- Community resource use at 3 years postpartum assessed how many (3 or more) resources had been accessed by mothers in the past year.

Key Findings:
- Neighbourhood deprivation was negatively associated with parent-child reading and community resource use.
- Neighbourhood deprivation and neighbourhood disorder were each positively associated with child physical activity at age 3.
- Higher levels of neighbourhood deprivation during pregnancy were associated with poorer child development at age 5.

Conclusions:
- A negative association was observed between neighbourhood deprivation during pregnancy and overall child development, indicating a modifiable factor that community development agencies can target to promote child development and maternal well-being.
- Parent-child reading was found to moderate effects of neighbourhood disorder, suggesting that parent-child reading may function as a protective factor in the presence of high neighbourhood disorder.
- Reading to young children and getting to know the community can help children learn and thrive.