



## MT. HOPE FAMILY CENTER

# RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT

### **Background Information:**

About 10% of women drink alcohol during pregnancy. Drinking during pregnancy is associated with many negative outcomes, like low birth weight, premature birth, and stillbirth. It's also associated with fetal alcohol spectrum disorders.

Also, when mothers experience depression during pregnancy, their babies are at greater risk for delayed development.

The goal of this study was to understand what factors influence a women's drinking during pregnancy.

### **What is the Partner Influence study?**

This study included 246, mostly White, pregnant women in Ukraine. Most of them were married or living with their partner, and their average age was 26 years old.

We looked at whether a woman's relationship with her partner, her partner's drinking and smoking, and her own feelings of depression shaped her drinking during pregnancy.

We also looked at whether mothers' prenatal alcohol use and depression affected the babies when they were six months old.

### **Here's a quick summary of what we found:**

- We found that a woman's partner is highly influential to her wellbeing during pregnancy. Specifically, women who were less happy with their relationship, and who had partners who drank alcohol or smoked tobacco, were more likely to drink alcohol or feel depressed during their third trimester. This was the case regardless of women's access to financial resources.
- We also found that mothers' drinking during pregnancy (but not depression) was associated with delayed development for the babies when they were six months old.

### **Why does this research matter??**

- The more we know about why women drink and feel depressed during pregnancy, the easier it will be to find helpful ways to support them.
- This research highlights how important the role of a woman's partner is during her pregnancy both for her own wellbeing, and for the development of the baby. Support services for pregnant women should consider including the partner and consider ways to support not only the relationship between the woman and her partner, but also the partner's own substance use.
- Our findings highlight that there are many reasons women may decide to drink during pregnancy. Women who drink during pregnancy can sometimes be judged and be made to feel like it is their fault. Learning more about why this happens can help us reduce this stigma and promote wellbeing for families.

### **WANT TO LEARN MORE? READ:**

[Partner influence as a factor in maternal alcohol consumption and depressive symptoms, and maternal effects on infant neurodevelopmental outcomes](#)

by Carson Kautz-Turnbull, Christie Petrenko, Liz Handley, Claire Coles, Julie Kable, Wladimir Wertelcki, Lyubv Yevtushok, Natalya Zymak-Zakutnya, Christina Chambers, and the CIFASD

Mt.  
**HOPE**  
family center