



APrON Newsletter

Fall 2019

## WHAT'S NEW WITH APrON?

### Autumn Greetings

The APrON study team hopes that you had a great summer and that the return to school and extracurricular activities has been going well. With the beginning of autumn upon us, we hope that you and your family will have an enjoyable Thanksgiving together. We would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude for the time commitment that you and your family have given to the APrON study.

### APrON 10th Anniversary Conference

This year, APrON is officially celebrating its 10th anniversary. A 10 year APrON conference will occur on April 20, 2020 at the Alberta Children's Hospital. We are still seeking funding for this conference, so stay tuned for more information. APrON participants are welcome to attend. During this conference, the results of APrON research pertaining to the impact of maternal prenatal nutritional intake and status on child development and maternal & child mental health will be shared. Updates will also be provided regarding the future directions of the APrON study. We will provide details of this conference in the near future.

### APrON Data Collection Update

Since the last update, the Eight is Great questionnaire has continued arriving in participants' mailboxes. The Eight is Great questionnaire is part of the Alberta Births Common Data (ABCD), which has been looking into topics such as socioeconomic status, child behaviour, child health and development, early childhood experiences, parenting, maternal health and wellbeing, and much more among APrON participants. If you haven't received an email to complete this questionnaire yet, look for this around the time your child turns eight.

[Read more](#)

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## Join APrON's Participant Advisory Committee

The APrON team is always looking for participants to join our advisory committee meetings and we want you to be a part of it! Share your ideas on how we can keep participants, like you, engaged and interested in our research. We want to hear from you. Sessions will be 1.5 hours long and will take place at the Owerko Centre at the Child Development Centre in Calgary. If you would like to learn more about this exciting opportunity, please contact us by email at [apron@ucalgary.ca](mailto:apron@ucalgary.ca)

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## RESULTS

### Study Title: Intergenerational Transmission of Adverse Childhood Experiences via Maternal Depression and Anxiety and Moderation by Child Sex



The impact of mothers' adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) during childhood and adolescence upon the development of their children is an important research topic. These ACEs include neglect; physical, verbal, and/or sexual abuse; witnessing such abuse; parental divorce; and if a household member engaged in substance abuse, went to prison, or was mentally ill. Previous research has demonstrated that such traumatic experiences increase the risk of mothers experiencing depression and anxiety during and immediately after pregnancy. Other studies have shown that maternal mental health affects children's behaviour.

The goal of this study was to investigate how mothers' ACEs from birth to early adulthood affected their children's behaviour. This study also examined whether mothers' depression and anxiety symptoms during and after pregnancy affected children's behaviour.

APrON data for 907 mothers and their children residing in Calgary and Edmonton was analyzed for this study. Mothers completed a questionnaire which inquired about their ACEs from birth to 18 years of age. Mothers also completed questionnaires to gauge their anxiety and depression symptoms during each trimester of pregnancy and from 3 months to 2 years postpartum. Mothers were also asked about their children's behaviour at 2 years of age.

The results from this study showed that mothers' ACEs are related to children's behaviour. Specifically, mothers who reported an increased number of ACEs before the age of 18 demonstrated higher symptoms of maternal depression and anxiety during pregnancy and immediately after. Higher symptoms of anxiety and depression resulted in increased behavioural problems among children, which was especially noticeable in boys compared to girls.

Overall, this study shows the importance of providing mental health interventions for

mothers who have undergone stressful experiences in early life and who have anxiety and depression. By providing these mothers with recommendations for accessible mental health treatment (such as individual therapy), the behavioural development of their children could likely be improved over the long term.

**Reference:** Letourneau, N., Dewey, D., Kaplan, B.J., Ntanda, H., Novick, J., Thomas, J.C., ... & APrON Study Team (2019). Intergenerational transmission of adverse childhood experiences via maternal depression and anxiety and moderation by child sex. *Journal of Developmental Origins of Health and Disease*, 10, 88-99..

If you are having any difficulty with your mood or stress level, or feel you need some help with your mental health because of traumatic experiences, please call your family doctor, or:

In the Calgary area: the Distress Line at 403-266-1605, or Access Mental Health at 403-943-1500

In the Edmonton area: the Distress Line at 780-482-4357, or the Edmonton Mental Health Clinic at 780-427-4444.

**To request the above or any other APrON publication please contact us at [apron@ucalgary.ca](mailto:apron@ucalgary.ca)**

**Click here** to view all of the APrON publications to date, or by following the link below:

[https://scholar.google.ca/scholar?hl=en&as\\_sdt=0%2C5&q=apron+study+team&btnG=](https://scholar.google.ca/scholar?hl=en&as_sdt=0%2C5&q=apron+study+team&btnG=)

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### **Send Us Your Feedback!**

If you have any comments or questions about the APrON Newsletter, we want to hear them! We would also like to hear your ideas for future newsletters. Please contact us at [apron@ucalgary.ca](mailto:apron@ucalgary.ca). We truly value your feedback!

### **Help Keep Our Files Up-To-Date**

Staying in touch with our participants is a key part of our work. When we lose touch with people we lose our ability to answer important health questions. If you have moved, changed your phone number or have a new email address, please take a moment to let us know of these changes. Keep in mind that we can send you surveys and keep you up-to-date with the APrON Leaflet no matter where you live, even if you are outside of Alberta or Canada.



**apronstudy.ca**

Questions? Email us at [apron@ucalgary.ca](mailto:apron@ucalgary.ca)

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