



Newsletter

Fall 2020

WHAT'S NEW WITH APrON?

Autumn Greetings

The APrON study team hopes that you had a great summer and that the return to school is 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.

Please Join Us to Celebrate APrON's 10th Anniversary with Our **FREE** Conference

We are excited to announce that the rescheduled Celebrating 10 Years: APrON Achievements & Evolution conference will occur online on October 29 - 30, 2020. APrON participants are welcome to attend. During this conference, results from the APrON study will be shared, including the impacts maternal prenatal nutritional intake and status have on child development and maternal & child mental health. Updates will also be provided on the future directions of the APrON study. Please follow this link for free registration:

<https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/celebrating-10-years-apron-achievements-evolution-tickets-86718127253>

After registering, you will be provided with the details to join this conference online.

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), and has been investigating topics among APrON participants, including: socioeconomic status, child behaviour, child health and development, early childhood experiences, parenting, maternal health and wellbeing, and much more. The ABCD study has pooled data from the APrON and All Our Families studies together that was collected from mothers, fathers, and children starting at age 5 years. If you have not received an email to complete this questionnaire do not worry! You will receive the Eight is Great questionnaire, around the time your child turns eight.

[Read more](#)

COVID-19 Pandemic: Impact on Maternal and Child Health



Update: COVID-19 Mothers Questionnaire

All mothers who are currently participating in the APrON study have been invited to participate in the APrON COVID-19 Impact study, which is investigating the impact of the pandemic on work life, activities of daily living, finances, coping, and maternal and child physical and mental health outcomes. This study is also examining factors that contribute to risk and resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic and will identify pre-pandemic factors that predict functioning over time. The electronic COVID-19 Impact Survey was sent out in May 2020. Mothers will be invited to participate in the follow-up survey at 6 months and 12 months follow-up.

Coming Soon: COVID-19 Youth Questionnaire

Information pertaining to the COVID-19 APrON youth questionnaire will be sent out to parents in early October 2020. Essentially, we are interested in understanding how COVID-19 has impacted children and youth's mental health, well-being, and coping. We are interested in understanding their feelings about going back to school, worries, and feelings of sadness or isolation, but also how they might be thriving or coping during these stressful/uncertain times.

It is anticipated that the APrON COVID-19 youth study will assist with developing strategies to improve maternal, child, and family health during COVID-19.

Please refer to the following APrON study website link for important COVID-19 resources:

<https://apronstudy.ca/covid-19-resources/>



Join APrON's Participant Advisory Committee

We want to hear from you! The APrON team is always looking for participants to join our advisory committee meetings to share their ideas on how we can keep participants, like you, engaged and interested in our research! If you would like to learn more about this exciting opportunity, please contact us by email at apron@ucalgary.ca.

RESULTS

Study Title: Pregnancy anxiety and preterm birth: The moderating role of sleep



Preterm birth (PTB) is when a baby is born before 37 weeks gestation. Preterm birth is sometimes associated with poor infant health and developmental outcomes. Previous studies have shown that mothers' poor quality of sleep, mothers' short duration of sleep, and pregnancy anxiety can increase the risk for PTB. However, no studies have investigated how the interaction between sleep and pregnancy anxiety are related to preterm birth. There were two main goals of this study: 1) examine the association between sleep (quality and duration) and pregnancy anxiety; 2) investigate if sleep helps to buffer the relationship between pregnancy anxiety and length of pregnancy. In this study, the Pregnancy-Related Anxiety Scale was used to collect data on pregnancy anxiety, and the Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index (PSQI) and Actigraphy were used to collect data on sleep (quality and duration) among 290 pregnant women. Length of pregnancies were also collected from mothers' medical records. Results show that increased pregnancy anxiety was associated with shorter length of pregnancies and increased risk of PTB. There was no direct association between sleep (quality and duration) and length of pregnancy or PTB. However, when women had short sleep duration in combination with pregnancy anxiety, their infants were at risk for PTB. We conclude that problems with sleep and pregnancy anxiety are common among pregnant women, but they are also modifiable. Next steps in this research include testing if treating sleep problems and anxiety in pregnancy can increase gestational age at birth.

Reference: Tomfohr-Madsen, L., Cameron, E. E., Dunkel Schetter, C., Campbell, T., O'Beirne, M., Letourneau, N., & Giesbrecht, G.F. (2019). Pregnancy anxiety and preterm birth: The moderating role of sleep. *Health Psychology*, 38, 1025-1035.

Study Title: Cerebral Blood Flow Increases Across Early Childhood

The brain grows and develops rapidly during childhood. To support this growth, blood and nutrients must be delivered and distributed throughout the brain. Adequate cerebral blood flow (CBF) is essential for proper brain function and development. Previous studies have shown CBR increases during infancy and decreases during adolescence, however we did not know at what age CBR began to decrease because no one had thoroughly studied CBF changes during early childhood. This study aimed to better CBF development in children and identify if there were differences in CBF development between boys and girls aged 2-7. Arterial spin labeling, a magnetic resonance imaging technique, was used to map age-related changes of CBF in a large longitudinal sample of 96 participants. Our results demonstrated steady increases of CBR across early childhood in many different brain regions until the age of 7 for both boys and girls. These changes happen alongside improvements in brain structure and function, suggesting that CBR provides ongoing support for growth, learning, and behaviour during early childhood.

Reference: Paniukov, D., Lebel, R.M., Giesbrecht, G. & Lebel, C. (2019). Cerebral blood flow increases across early childhood. *NeuroImage*, 204, 1-7.

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=

To request the above or any other APrON publication please contact us at apron@ucalgary.ca

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. 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. Please contact us at apron@ucalgary.ca. 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

Please add apron@ucalgary.ca to your address book to ensure our emails reach your inbox.

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