

Reflection 3 (Jenna Lee)

Describe relevant environmental effects on prenatal development.

As human development occurs in an environment, prenatal development can be affected by a variety of environmental factors including maternal age, multiple gestations, maternal nutrition, maternal illness, exposure to toxic substances like alcohol, nicotine, and drugs, as well as maternal depression and anxiety. Fetal growth and development can be affected by these factors, leading to birth defects, low birth weights, and developmental delays.

For instance, it is more likely that older mothers will suffer from illness and complications during pregnancy. Pregnancies involving more than one fetus are more likely to have complications. It is possible to have IUGR and low birth weight as a result of poor nutrition. Deficiencies in certain vitamins and minerals can lead to health problems. There are several diseases that can affect a pregnant woman or a fetus at birth, such as syphilis, gonorrhea, and HIV. Birth defects can be caused by both drug abuse and alcohol abuse. It is striking to note that ten to eleven percent of newborn babies are affected by their mothers' drug or alcohol use during pregnancy. Premature birth, miscarriage, and other pregnancy complications increase with maternal smoking.

Therefore, it is critical for expectant mothers to be aware of these risks and to take steps to minimize their exposure to potentially harmful substances during pregnancy. It is also important for social workers to incorporate the environment's effects on prenatal development into their work.

Evaluate the significance of the concept of a sensitive period for developing mother–infant bonding.

In the textbook (Ashford et al., 2018), a sensitive period refers to a window of time when certain developmental processes are most receptive to stimulation. In 1976, pediatricians discovered that human mothers experienced a sensitive period for bonding with their infants just after birth. In the context of mother-infant bonding, many research articles have substantiated that early mother-infant contact is critical for parent-child bonding as it is the sensitive period that is believed to be a crucial time for establishing strong emotional and attachment bonds between a mother and her newborn. Despite this, some researchers argue that early bonding should not be overemphasized. A certain culture, for example, requires family members to care for newborn babies while the mother recovers. Additionally, there is a lack of scientific evidence supporting the long-term effects of parent-child attachment (Bennington, 2010).

Ashford, J. B., LeCroy, C. W., & Williams, L. R. (2018). Human behavior in the social environment : a multidimensional perspective (6th ed.). Boston, MA: Cengage Learning. ISBN: 978-1-305-86030-8