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HEALTH SCIENCES
Psychiatry & Behavioural
Neurosciences

Research Work

We are interested in how the perinatal environment affects brain development in ways that increase the risk of psychiatric problems across the lifespan. We use three models to test the developmental origins of health and disease hypothesis as it applies to mental disorders:

- a) preterm birth
- b) maternal obesity
- c) perinatal depression

Our group has developed a number of treatments for women that seek to optimize offspring neurodevelopment. We are testing these in clinical trials aimed at: i) treating maternal perinatal depression, and ii) optimizing gestational weight gain.

The majority of these trials are aimed at improving maternal access to treatment for perinatal depression. We have partnered with public health units and not-for-profit organizations around the province to determine if:

- a) We can train public health nurses to deliver effective group CBT for postpartum depression (PPD)
- b) We can train these nurses to deliver an effective CBT-based resilience curriculum to young mothers attending high school
- c) We can train women who have recovered from PPD to deliver effective group CBT to women currently struggling with PPD
- d) A newly developed 1-Day CBT-Based Workshop can effectively treat PPD

This work is positioned at the next frontier of child health: interventions aimed at optimizing brain development.

Engagement Opportunities

Introductory Level

- Data entry
- Reviewing abstracts for systematic reviews
- Extracting data for systematic reviews

Intermediate Level

- Conducting structured clinical interviews
- Assisting with writing systematic reviews
- Assisting with testing of women and their offspring

Advanced Level

- Data analysis of primary or secondary data-based projects
- Helping to run CBT-based workshops
- Manuscript writing (systematic reviews, or those based on empirical data)

If you are interested in learning more, please leave your contact information with the Research Office and/or contact Ryan Van Lieshout (vanlierj@mcmaster.ca).