

# factors that increase risk of ADHD

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*News Reporter*

Offspring of mothers with gestational diabetes and low socioeconomic status have a higher risk of developing attention deficit/hyperactive disorder (ADHD), according to a study conducted by Queens College professors Yoko Nomura and Jeffrey Halperin.

Students in suburban schools frequently achieve better grades than students in urban areas. According to data from the Editorial Projects in Education Research Center, 83 percent of suburban students finish all four years with a diploma but only 53 percent of high school students enrolled in urban schools graduate.

Children born into financially unstable families in urban areas are more likely to develop ADHD than their suburban counterparts. Nomura and Halperin's research suggests that adding a mother with gestational diabetes to the mix of this instability intensifies the risk of the disorder developing.

"ADHD can be aggravated by environmental factors such as growing up in a poor family. Babies need intellectual stimuli to strengthen their neurocognitive levels," Nomura said. "Mothers with low socioeconomic status tend to be more stressed because they are focused on providing a good environment for the baby. This puts the baby at risk for developing mental abnormalities."

The research group tested 212 children

between the ages of three and four and re-evaluated them at age six. The team found that while mothers with gestational diabetes and low socioeconomic status increased the chance of the child developing ADHD, when these two factors are combined, the risk increased fourteenfold.

Children born from struggling mothers with gestational diabetes demonstrated lower IQ, poorer language and low behavioral and emotional functionality.

"The main focus of mothers of low socioeconomic status is survival and providing for their baby. For many stay-at-home moms, the last thing on their mind is music lessons for their child to increase intellectual stimuli," Nomura said.

Though the reasons behind the findings remain unclear, the study stated that women with gestational diabetes should be informed about preventative measures to avoid substandard development of the brain and to reduce the risk of ADHD in their children.

Nomura believes women need to be more conscientious about their baby both prenatal and postnatal.

"We need to inform women who are thinking of having a baby that they need to be more wary about how they eat and exercise. Mental and medical health doesn't just end at birth," she said. "This project is ongoing and we will continue to check in with these kids in our research every six months for new developments."

# ... sweetens homes in Alabama

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*News Reporter*

Fifteen students from Queens College Hillel, along with Rachel Barnehama, the group's director of engagement and Israel programming, volunteered in Alabama this past January to provide relief to victims of a series of tornadoes.

An extremely large and violent tornado outbreak occurred from April 25-28, 2011. The outbreak affected the Southern, Midwestern and Northeastern portions of the U.S., leaving catastrophic destruction in its wake, especially across the state of Alabama. In total, 239 Alabama residents died as a result of the outbreak, according to the state's Emergency Management Agency.

The QC Hillel group volunteered with the Jewish Disaster Response Corps, a nonprofit organization dedicated to mobilizing the Jewish community by providing direct assistance to communities recovering from natural disasters.

The QC volunteers found themselves working in different disaster sights in Birmingham, Ala. One of their stops was

in Pratt City. The city was in shambles; the tornadoes uprooted the entire town. The work the students had before them was grueling and exhausting.

"It is hard to see the bigger picture of what the house will ultimately look like when you are only working on it for five days," said Tori Ratzker, senior. "But by the way everyone appreciates what you are doing; you can tell how much your work actually means."

The students also ventured to another small town in Birmingham called Pleasant Grove. The devastation that remained was intolerable with hundreds of homes destroyed. Students stood amongst the destruction at a loss for words.

Jordana Samot, a QC sophomore, reflected on her experience.

"While we only visited Alabama for one week and then returned to our normal New York lives, it is important to remember that those we left behind in Alabama are still suffering, and still trying to survive and rebuild their lives," Samot said.

