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It's the mother!: How assumptions about the causal primacy of maternal effects influence research on the developmental origins of health and disease

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It's the mother!: how assumptions about the causal primacy of maternal effects influence research on the developmental origins of health and disease

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## Abstract

Research on the developmental origins of health and disease (DOHaD) has traditionally focussed on how maternal exposures around the time of pregnancy might influence offspring health and risk of disease. We acknowledge that for some exposures this is likely to be correct, but argue that the focus on maternal pregnancy effects also reflects implicit and deeply-held assumptions that 1) causal early life exposures are primarily transmitted via maternal traits or exposures, 2) maternal exposures around the time of pregnancy and early infancy are particularly important, and 3) other factors, such as paternal factors and postnatal exposures in later life, have relatively little impact in comparison. These implicit assumptions

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