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Father-child and mother-child early interactions in the French Elfe cohort

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CONTEXT.

Parent-child interactions impact strongly on socio-emotional and language development of the child. However, only few researches have explored early parent-child interactions by considering both the mother and the father.

OBJECTIVE.

To explore early mother-child and father-child interactions (measure and factors impacting on the level of interactions) DATA. The Elfe Cohort is a French nationally representative longitudinal study of children born in 2011. At maternity, more than 18,000 families were interviewed and then followed up at 2 months (and then 1 year and 2 years). Mothers and fathers were interviewed separately at 2 months with similar questions on their interactions with their child. The early parent-child interactions score was created using multiple correspondence analysis (MCA). Socio-demographic characteristics of the family, information on the pregnancy and on the birth were collected at maternity and at 2 months.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION.

At 2 months, around 15% of the children had a low level of interaction with their mother or/and their father. A weak correlation was observed between the mother and the father scores. The comparison between mothers and fathers will be developed by analysing factors impacting on early parent-child interactions. In one hand, it will be explored if there is a similar social-gradient in mother-child and father-child early interactions. On the other hand, it will be explored if pregnancy and birth characteristics have a similar impact on mother-child and father-child early interactions (e.g. is there an impact of an unplanned pregnancy? of a premature birth? of breastfeeding?).