

## **PRESS RELEASE** *Embargoed: 0.01 BST 4 August 2001*

### **Depression during pregnancy more common than postnatal depression**

**Researchers at the University of Bristol have found that symptoms of depressed mood are more common in women when they are pregnant than after their child is born.**

The findings were announced by Dr Jonathan Evans, a depression expert on the Children of the 90s project, also known as ALSPAC (Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children). This study based in Bristol was designed to evaluate the effects of personal, social and environmental factors on the development of children from early pregnancy onwards.

Over 9000 of the Children of the 90s mothers answered questions on depressive symptoms during pregnancy and after the birth. Dr Evans explained, "We found that symptoms of depression were actually more common during pregnancy and the patterns were the same as those found after childbirth. The symptoms experienced during pregnancy lasted just as long as those following the birth."

The researchers suggest that 'postnatal depression' may not be any different from depression experienced during pregnancy or at any other time. Dr Evans said, "Much effort has been placed on recognising and treating postnatal depression and studying its consequences but depression during pregnancy has been relatively neglected. We hope to use the wealth of data collected from the Children of the 90s study to gain a better understanding of the effect of depression during pregnancy on the mother and her developing child".

**Notes:**

1. Cohort study of depressed mood during pregnancy and after childbirth". J Evans, JE Heron and the ALSPAC Study Team. BMJ 2001; 323: 257-260.
2. Please acknowledge 'Children of the 90s' in any reporting. Further details on the study can be found at <http://www.ich.bristol.ac.uk/alspac.html>

**Contact:**

Nick Kerswell (Press officer)

Tel: +44 (0) 117 9285096 Fax: +44 (0) 117 9285010

Email: [Nick.Kerswell@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:Nick.Kerswell@bristol.ac.uk)

Dr Jonathan Evans

Tel: +44 (0) 117 9287769 Fax: +44 (0) 117 9259709

Email: [j.evans@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:j.evans@bristol.ac.uk)