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Journal of Pediatric Psychology Advance Access originally published online on May 11, 2006

Journal of Pediatric Psychology 2007 32(2):154-166; doi:10.1093/jpepsy/jsj123

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Prevalence and Correlates of Early Onset Asthma and Wheezing in a Healthy Birth Cohort of 2- to 3-Year Olds

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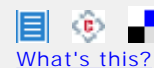
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▶ Abstract

Objective The combined contribution of neonatal, perinatal, and maternal health, demographic, environmental, and family psychosocial factors to early onset asthma and wheezing in a healthy birth cohort was examined. **Methods** Participants included 1,158 ethnically and socioeconomically diverse parents of 2- and 3-year olds who completed mailed questionnaires. **Results** Asthma and wheezing prevalence was 8.4 and 8.1%, respectively. Asthma during pregnancy, smoking in the home, and being male increased risk for asthma diagnosis and wheezing whereas social support minimized risk for both. Shorter gestational age, exposure to violence, and maternal anxiety increased risk for wheezing. The


negative impact of smoking in the home was greatest for children with shorter gestational ages and mothers with asthma during pregnancy. **Conclusion** Findings confirm and extend previous work documenting demographic risks and highlight smoking, violent events, and social support in early onset asthma and wheezing. Findings illustrate the need for ecologically based interventions to treat asthma and wheezing in young children.

Key words: asthma; early childhood; health; stress.

Received February 1, 2005; revision received June 15, 2005; revision received August 25, 2005; revision received February 28, 2006; accepted April 9, 2006

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Online ISSN 1465-735X - Print ISSN 0146-8693

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