

The environment and its relation to child health

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Although considerable lip service is paid to the influence of the physical environment on child health, the majority of studies are confined to outdoor air pollution. This is in contrast to the actual exposures, particularly of the young child and of the fetus where the major influences are likely to be the indoor environment as well as to include major sources of exposures such as the beverages drunk and the food ingested.

The varying influences of different environmental exposures on various aspects of health and development will be illustrated, using information collected from the Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children (ALSPAC). This study began in the early pregnancies of ~14000 women resident in the Avon area of the UK. Detailed measures were made in pregnancy and throughout infancy and childhood. The results will include aspects of maternal diet in pregnancy, fetal exposure to mercury and use chemical cleaning agents and aerosols in the home.

<http://www.alspac.bris.ac.uk>