

Research Reviews

Long Term Effects of Home Visitation

Olds,D., Eckenrode,J., Henderson,C., Kitzman,H., Powers,J., Cole,R., Sidora,K., Morris,P., Pettit,L., & Luckey,D. (1997). Long term effect of home visitation on maternal life course and child abuse and neglect. JAMA, 278,(8), 637-643.

Home-visitation services have been utilized as a means of improving maternal and child health and functioning. To examine the long-term effects of the Nurse Family Partnership Program (prenatal and early childhood home visitation by nurses) on women's life course and child abuse and neglect, this randomized trial enrolled 400 pregnant women in semi-rural community, where families received an average of 9 home visits during pregnancy and 23 home visits from the child's birth through the second birthday. Of these subjects, 324 participated in a follow-up study when their children were 15 years old.

The findings at the 15-year period after the birth of their first child, in contrast to women in the comparison group:

- Women who were visited by nurses during pregnancy and infancy were identified as perpetrators of child abuse and neglect in 0.29 vs 0.54 verified CPS data reports.
- Among women who were unmarried and from households of low socioeconomic status at initial enrollment, in contrast to those in the comparison group, nurse-visited women had:
 - fewer subsequent births
 - almost twice as many months between the birth of the first and a second child
 - less time receiving Aid to Families With Dependent Children (60 vs 90 months)
 - less behavioral impairments due to alcohol and other drug use
 - less arrests by self-report, and arrests disclosed by state records.

The NFP program consisting of prenatal and early childhood home visitation by nurses, can reduce the number of subsequent pregnancies, the use of welfare, child abuse and neglect, and criminal behavior on the part of low-income, unmarried mothers for up to 15 years after the birth of the first child.