

# Possible Relationships between Parental Self-Esteem, Prenatal Social Support, Prenatal Parenting Expectations, and Postpartum Maternal Attachment in Primiparas

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## ***Abstract***

The purpose of this research was to identify relationships between attachment and the factors of self-esteem, social support and parenting expectations in a rural western setting. Prenatal data were collected from 40 primiparous volunteers during the seventh month of pregnancy. Self-esteem was measured using the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory. Social support was measured with the Norbeck Social Support Questionnaire. Parenting expectations were measured using the Adult-Adolescent Parenting Inventory (AAPI). Postpartum data on attachment were measured at two weeks using the Early Feeding Observation (EFO) in the subject's home. Few significant relationships were identified between attachment and the three variables. Planned pregnancies were associated with higher attachment levels than were unplanned pregnancies ( $F=5.115$ ;  $p=0.154$ ). The only construct from the AAPI which showed a significant relationship to attachment in this sample of primiparous women was Inappropriate Expectations ( $r=-.3069$ ;  $p=.029$ ). Neither Empathy ( $r=-.0272$ ;  $p=.434$ ), Corporal Punishment ( $r=.0388$ ;  $p=.407$ ), nor Role Reversal ( $r=.2760$ ;  $p=.024$ ); and Inappropriate Expectations ( $r=.6066$ ;  $p=0.00$ ). Nurses were encourage to recommend family planning and support positive women's attitudes during pregnancy. The homogeneity of the sample and study limitations restricted further recommendation. Further development of the EFO and longitudinal attachment studies were suggested.