

Maternal care and self-confidence in being a mother

The relationship between self-confidence in being a mother and the quality of maternal care as a child was explored. 92 women were interviewed. Their confidence in their mothering skills was measured through a set of questions, the answers to which were averaged to obtain a Confidence score between 1 (no confidence at all) and 4 (high confidence). The quality of maternal care when they were children was also measured using a set of questions. The answers to the questions were averaged giving a Maternal Care score between 1 (very poor) and 4 (excellent). A possible second predictor, self-esteem, was added to the analysis measured on a scale of 1 (very low) to 4 (very high).

A linear regression analysis was carried out with Maternal Care entered in the first model and Self-esteem added in the second model. The model parameters are summarized in Table 1.

	b	Beta	t	p
Model 1				
Constant	3.27		23.24	<.001
Maternal Care	0.11	0.27	2.63	.010
Model 2				
Constant	2.94		16.97	<.001
Maternal Care	0.06	0.14	1.32	.189
Self-esteem	0.14	0.32	3.03	.003

Table 1. Summary of parameters of Model 1 and Model 2.

Model 1 with just Maternal Care entered gave a significant result ($R^2 = .071$, $F(1, 90) = 6.92$, $p = .01$) suggesting that the quality of maternal care in childhood explained about 7% of the variance in confidence in being a mother. Model 2 with Self-esteem added was also significant ($R^2 = .159$, $F(2, 89) = 8.37$, $p < .001$). As shown in Table 1, however, the contribution of Maternal Care is no longer significant while the contribution of Self-esteem is. We interpret this result as indicating that Maternal Care only had an indirect effect on Confidence, which was mediated by Self-esteem. That is, the quality of maternal care in childhood does not have an effect on an individual's confidence in their mothering skills over and above the individual's level of self-esteem.