

Are maternal and child digital technology use related to child development?

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Hey, did you know 75% of Australian young children regularly use mobile touch screen devices (MTSD)?

Could using these devices have an impact on their development?

Great question! A group of researchers have tried to find out if maternal and child technology use is associated with child development.

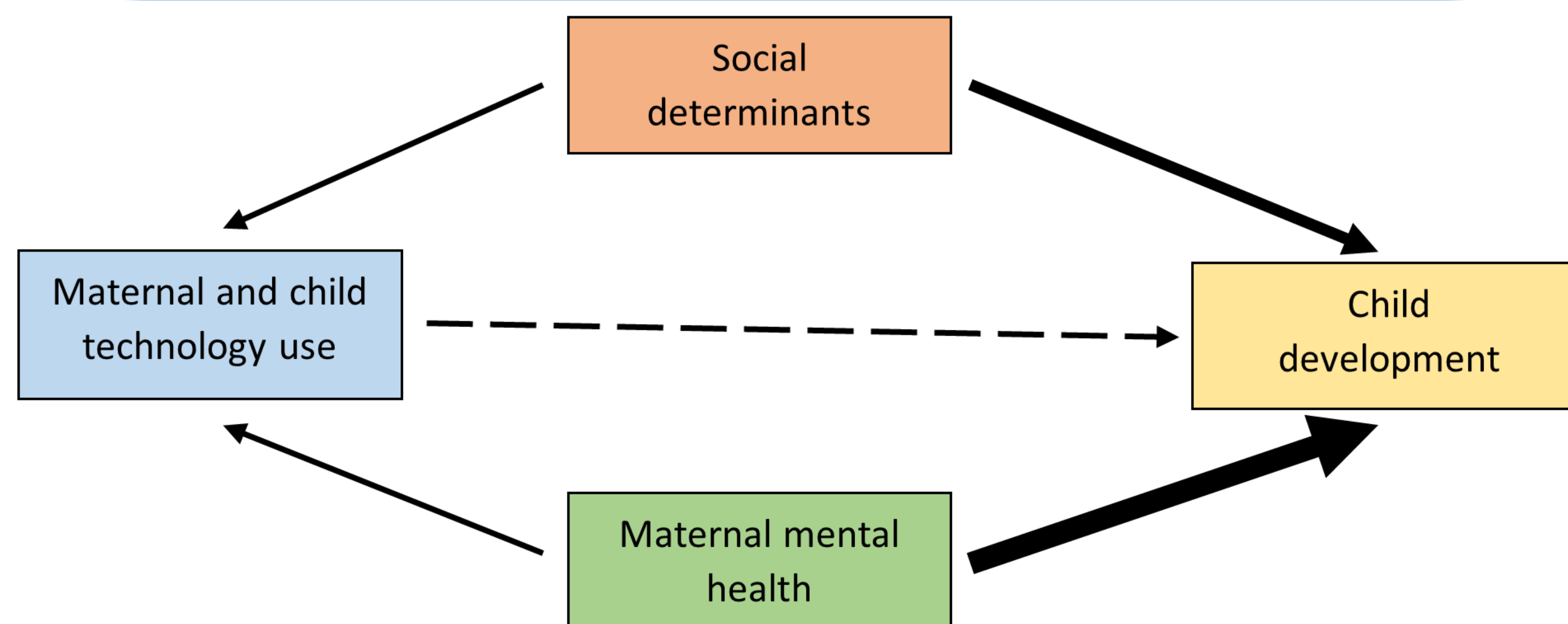
Ok. Well that sounds important. How did they do this research?

It was data from a cohort in Western Australia, called the ORIGINS Project, a collaboration between the Telethon Kids Institute and Joondalup Health Campus which is part of Ramsay Health Care. Data were collected when infants were 12-months of age, including maternal and child technology use (TechU-Q), sociodemographic factors, maternal mental health (DASS-21), and child development (Ages and Stages Questionnaire). Linear regression was used for analyses.

And what did they find?

They found mothers (n=1157) spent on average (SD), 145 (99.7) minutes using a TV and 173 (43.2) minutes using MTSD daily, while children spent 33 (56.5) minutes using a TV and 5 (14.6) minutes using MTSD daily.

More time spent using MTSD by mothers and children was weakly but statistically significantly related with poorer child development. However, after adjusting models for sociodemographic factors and maternal mental health, time spent using MTSD was no longer associated with child development. In contrast, poorer maternal mental health was strongly and consistently related to poorer child development. Check out the cool image showing the relationships!



That is very interesting!! But what does all of this really mean?

Maternal and child technology use were not associated with child development at 12 months of age when sociodemographic factors and maternal mental health were considered. Maternal mental health continued to be associated with child development after adjusting for sociodemographic factors. Future exploration of longitudinal associations between parental and child technology use, other family factors, and child development are needed to support targeted guidance for families and professionals caring for children.

Awesome!! So who did this amazing work??

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