

# BANGL NEWSLETTER

Behavioral and Neurodevelopmental Genetics Laboratory

Edition 1 ~ Summer 2015

## MOM'S FEELINGS MATTER

About 1 in 10 mothers become depressed during pregnancy. Then, up to 80% of mothers are affected by **baby blues**, a kind of depression that begins right after childbirth and lasts up to a couple of weeks. It is pretty common and happens a lot. However, about 13% of moms stay sad even longer and have more symptoms—this is called **postpartum depression**, and it can last for a year after the birth of the baby. In the Infant Development Study, 32% of moms have screened positive for depression at some point during their pregnancy or within the first year after their baby was born. Another finding in our study is that the more traumatic events a mom had both when she was under 18 and before she was pregnant, the more likely she would suffer from depression during pregnancy and a year after birth. This is important information that we hope will help more moms realize how they are feeling and get support. We also hope this will help doctors to better support mothers as well.

Depression, both during and after pregnancy, affects not only the mom, but also the baby. When mom is depressed, there may be delays in the really important mother-child bond, less responsive caring for the baby, and less ability to help the baby calm down, adjust to a regular schedule, and grow. Depression in moms can be

caused by many different things going on in a mother's life, such as unemployment or low household income, changes in personal relationships, or relationship violence. When a mom is pregnant, not only is the stress greater, but her body is changing in ways that can impact her mood and emotions. When the baby is finally here, the added challenge of caring for the baby, less sleep and being tired, just make it harder. The first thing for any mom to remember is that she is not alone. If you feel you may be suffering from depression, whether it is baby blues, postpartum depression, or something you have struggled with for a long time, talking to your doctor is a good way to get you the help you need. There are also many good resources available on the internet and in the community.

The resources listed below are available in the Greater New Orleans area and some are nationally available.

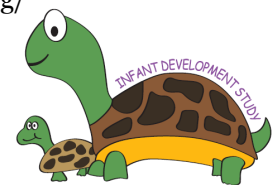
Resources:

Fussy Baby Network: [www.fussybabynetworknogg.com/](http://www.fussybabynetworknogg.com/)

Children's Bureau of New Orleans: [www.childrensbureau.com/programs/infant-mental-health](http://www.childrensbureau.com/programs/infant-mental-health)

Zero to Three: [www.zerotothree.org/](http://www.zerotothree.org/)

PPD Moms: [www.180oppdmoms.org/](http://www.180oppdmoms.org/)



<http://tulane.edu/som/bangl/index.cfm>  
bangltulane@gmail.com  
504-656-6449

## BANGL's Progress



The study began in August 2013 and there were 72 prenatal visits that year! In 2014, our first full year, there were 155 visits! Now, in the first half of 2015, 41 visits have been completed! We have many more moms and babies to recruit to make our goal for the study and we would love your help to make that happen. Thank you all for your participation and making this study such a success!



### A QUICK NOTE:

- 92% of the babies born during the study have been a healthy weight (at least 5.5 pounds).
- 37% of moms and babies participating in the study went to a Tulane hospital.
- Moms in our study come from all over Louisiana, and 56% of them are from New Orleans.



### ATTENTION Dads and Grandparents!

Have you ever wondered if other family members can help protect and buffer babies from stress? A lot of our dads and grandparents did— so guess what— we decided to add them to the study! We listened to what they told us, and now if you are a dad or a grandparent, we want you to be part of the Infant Development Study too. **How can you be part of this?** For our 18 month visit, we encourage all dads and grandparents to take part in the study. As your baby grows, we know that they are forming strong relationships with many people in their life, and we would love to hear from some of the other important figures in your child’s life. We have had 6 dads and grandparents participate already, and are looking for more dads and grandparents to help us. Just let us know!



## 6 MONTH MILESTONES

At this point, your little one will be growing at a slower rate, about 1 pound a month. Fortunately for you, they will start to sleep 6-8 hours. Their eye color may have changed in the past few months, but by this time, they usually find their final shade. If you haven’t already, you can start feeding them solid foods, like fruits and vegetables, in small pieces, since they don’t have too many teeth yet! Do not be wary if their stool begins to look a little different because of the new diet. Your baby will begin to sit up all by themselves and roll around a bit more! They also may be bouncing up and down, and grabbing toys and objects with their thumbs or fingers. Get excited to see more smiling, laughing, and babbling! Keep talking to your baby, even if they aren't talking back they are learning!

**TIPS:** Play peek-a-boo to teach your baby that people and objects still exist when they are not visible, called **object permanence**. Place toys out of reach a little on the floor to encourage crawling. Dress them in stretchy, breathable clothes so they have plenty of room to move around! Encourage story time and talking to your little one so they work on language development.

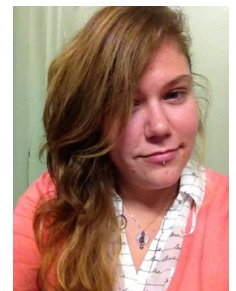
**KEEP IN MIND:** Every baby is *unique* with their own personality! The personality of your little one will become more distinct, and do not fear if milestones are slow in coming as each baby grows at their own pace! If you are worried or concerned about your child’s development, don’t hesitate to ask your pediatrician.

## WELCOMING NEW LAB MEMBERS...



**HANAN**

Undergraduate Research Assistant



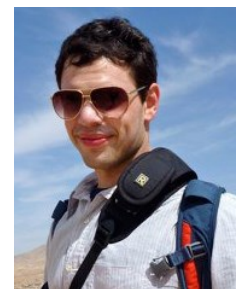
**BRITTANY**

Clinical Research Assistant



**JESSE**

Clinical Research Assistant



**JONATHAN**

Medical Research Assistant

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