

Introduction to Developmental Psychology for Demographers and Social Epidemiologists

What are newborn babies thinking as they gaze at us from their crib? How do they make sense of the confusing, complex world around them? Are pre-school children like “slow” adults or are there fundamental differences between their and adult thinking? To what extent is development, and related individual differences, driven from within the individual and what is the influence of outside forces? What is the impact of early interactions within the family on further development and health across the lifespan?

The purpose of this course is to present an overview of contemporary developmental psychology. Developmental psychology involves the study of constancy and change throughout the lifespan, from conception to death. Such a life course approach offers an interdisciplinary framework for guiding research on human development, aging and health, thus bringing together psychological, cognitive, biological and more recently epidemiological and demographic research on developmental processes and their consequences.

The basic structure and functional organization of the brain is constructed through processes that begin early in life and continue into adulthood. With a focus on early development, the course will thus briefly review the areas of physical-motor, cognitive, social, and personality development, in a hope that basics in the science of early childhood and early brain development will help a better understanding of how early life experiences are related to later developmental and health outcomes. We will particularly focus on two such fundamental domains of influence: responsive, stable relationships and safe, supportive environments. We will further examine possible mechanisms for these influences on further development and health, including recent scientific findings that illustrate how early experiences can alter gene expression, with lifelong consequences on the developing individual.

Spaces are limited for this workshop and will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis. Application deadline is February 10. Apply by sending a mail to [Anna Tegunimataka](mailto:anna.tegunimataka@hhs.se).

Time: 1 – 2 March, 2012 (8:30 – 16:00)

Location: CRC Malmö, room 60-13-014