

**Title: GEOGRAPHIC VARIATION IN PARENTS' PERCEPTION OF THEIR COMMUNITIES' SOCIAL CAPITAL AND ASSOCIATED FACTORS**

John Pascoe, MD<sup>1</sup>, Sandra Specht, PhD<sup>1</sup>, Greg Eberhart, MD<sup>1</sup>, Taunya Jasper, MD<sup>1</sup>, Eileen Kasten, MD<sup>1</sup>, Alyssa Gans, MA<sup>1</sup> and Wendy Looman, PhD<sup>2</sup>. <sup>1</sup>Pediatrics, Wright State University, Dayton, Ohio, United States and <sup>2</sup>School of Nursing, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota, United States.

**Background:** Research supports the observation that individuals who are more "embedded" socially in their communities enjoy better health compared to more socially isolated individuals. This study examines geographic variation, using families' residential zipcodes, in the parental reports of their communities' social capital, employing a new Social Capital Scale (SCS). The survey also included a validated depression screen and a validated childhood quality of life scale (CQoL).

**Objective:** To assess the putative variation in communities' social capital as reported by parents across six zipcodes using a new SCS as well as factors related to SCS scores.

**Design/Methods:** A cross-sectional convenience sample of 663 parents was recruited from a children's hospital subspecialty clinic (N=120) and primary care practices (N=401) within the Southwestern Ohio Ambulatory Research Network (SOAR-Net) between September 2006 and October 2007. Study parents were recruited to complete a written survey that included demographic data (including zipcodes of families' communities), the SCS, the Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale (CES-D) and a validated CQoL. 118 parents refused to participate and 24 surveys were incomplete and not analyzed. A subset of data (N=186) from the six zipcodes with >20 families was analyzed.

**Results:** Over three quarters (77%) of respondents were birth mothers, 42% had more than a high school education, two thirds of the children were Euro-American and 60% did not have private health insurance and received Medicaid or were "Self Pay". Mean SCS scores, mean CES-D scores and annual household income (AHI) all varied significantly across zipcodes: SCS 75.6 (+/-1.4) to 67.4 (+/-1.3)(p=0.002), CES-D, 15.1(+/-1.7) to 8.9(+/-1.0)(p=0.034), AHI <=\$50,000 96.6% to 8.7% (p=0.000). Parents with higher income reported more social capital in their communities(r=+.14, p=0.08) and fewer depressive symptoms (r=-.26, p=0.001). Mean scores on CQoL did not vary significantly across zipcodes (p=0.36).

**Conclusions:** Mean SCS and CES-D scores varied significantly across communities in this study. Parents from zipcodes with higher AHI reported higher levels of social capital and lower levels of depressive symptoms. Future studies should examine longitudinally the relation among social capital, parents' depressive symptoms and children's quality of life in multiple communities.