Prenatal Care for Dads
Mansoo Yu studies the role of father-to-be

THE ROLE OF FATHER-TO-BE plays an important role in infant health, asserts Mansoo Yu, assistant professor in the School of Social Work at the College of Human Environmental Sciences. "In addition to promoting psychosocial well-being of women, it is important to promote psychosocial well-being of men for better pregnancy outcomes," Yu explains. "I believe that promoting the psychosocial well-being of expectant fathers will positively influence mother and infant health."

Yu analyzed 66 low-income Missouri couples and examined how stress and social support impacted men and women differently. Among his observations, he found that pregnancy was an emotional stressor for women, but a financial stressor for men. In terms of social support, for example, women wanted men to tolerate their “ups and downs,” but instead men gave women tangible support, such as financial aid, which they deemed more important.

Understanding these differences in psychosocial dimensions between couples during pregnancy may also help build positive and healthy relationships between parents and children. “I hypothesize a healthy parent-child relationship may protect children from developing psychosocial issues such as anxiety, disruptive behavior, and adolescent health-risk behavior,” says Yu, who has two young children himself. “When I was first a dad-to-be, I did not know where to get information related to men,” he explains. But thanks to Yu’s findings, which were published in the Journal of Advanced Nursing, and his future research, other fathers-to-be should be well informed.

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