Research Using the Difficult Life Circumstances

The Difficult Life Circumstances (DLC) is primarily used as a clinical tool for needs assessment, but it is also used in research to quantify difficult life circumstances among different populations (see Table 1). Reviewing the literature base helps us understand how difficult life circumstances relate to other functioning domains. In Table one we list a recent review of studies using the DLC.

Table 1. Articles Using DLC Published 2010–2023: Author, Study Population, and Description*

Author	**Population**	**Study Description**
Barboza-Salerno 2020	Longitudinal study of 682 first-time mothers, average age 21 in South and Southeastern United States.	A study examining predictors of parenting stress for young mothers across the first three years of child's life.
Byrd et al., 2021	Community-based sample (N=2020) e.g. Pittsburgh Girls Study.	An examination of threat exposure predicts the risk of depression, anxiety, borderline and antisocial personality disorders and if social-emotional deficits mediate the prediction.
Conrad-Hiebner et al., 2015	Spanish speaking caregivers receiving parenting services (N =133).	A study designed to measure resiliency in a sample of Spanish speaking families.
Conrad-Hiebner et al., 2015	Sample of Spanish (N=148) speaking participants receiving parenting services.	A study aiming at validating a protective factor scale developed for Spanish speaking families.
Elliott et al., 2014	First time young (~ 20 years) mother, lower ed/income, 60% White (N = 33).	Pilot test to evaluate psychosocial and environmental risk on infants and caregivers.
Hash et al., 2019	A sample of 247 parents under investigation for child maltreatment and their children 10-24 months of age.	A study of the impact of adversity on child's sleep. DLC was used as a measure of child's current experience of adversity.
Jakubowski et al., 2022	Young adults who drink alcohol aged 21-30 (N = 114).	Stress in young adults and psychosocial outcomes pre and post COVID-19 pandemic.
Jirikowic et al., 2016	Infants aged 6-15 months and their biological mothers (N=18).	A study of infant regulation and stress reactivity in a sample of infants at high-risk for fetal alcohol spectrum disorders.

Keenan et al., 2014	Pregnant African American women 16–21 weeks gestation (N = 64).	A study testing the effect of receiving docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) supplement, cortisol, and perceived stress.
Keenan et al., 2017	A community-based sample (N = 151 biological mothers) e.g. the Pittsburgh Girls Study.	Testing the accuracy of maternal recall of prenatal complications.
Letourneau et al., 2013	Mothers in Canada currently exposed to interpersonal violence, 84% White (N = 49).	Mother and infant/toddler response to interpersonal violence.
Moses-Kolko et al., 2021	Young mothers (N= 137) enrolled in the Pittsburg Girls study.	An examination of Early Life Stress and human neurobiological prediction of maternal caregiving behaviors via hippocampal GM volume.
Nast et al., 2013	Review of tools to measure stress (depression, anxiety, daily hassles, life events, environmental stressors, and pregnancy related stressors).	Review of 115 studies that identified 43 measures of stress for pregnant women. DLC was one of the tools in the review.
Quick et al., 2023	Longitudinal study of Black and White women during the perinatal period (N = 175).	A study of psychological well-being during the perinatal period.
Scott et al., 2015	A longitudinal cohort study of (N=2450) adolescent girls aged 10-21 in a low-income neighborhood e.g. Pittsburgh Girls Study	The aim of the study was designed to predict suicide attempts in adolescent girls.
Secco et al., 2014	Lower education mothers (N=12) with children aged 1-5.	A description of stress and strengths of mothers in methadone maintenance treatment
Sroka, et al., 2023	A sample of pregnant African American (N= 45)	A study of prenatal stress and high depression.
Stepp et al., 2016	Adolescent girls (N=113) at risk for borderline personality disorder (BPD) e.g. Pittsburgh Girls Study	A study of negative emotionality as a marker of risk to developing BPD. DLC was used in a composite as a measure of family adversity.

Tsao et al., 2015	Pregnant Vietnamese women in Taiwan (N = 44).	A study of the health and wellbeing of Vietnamese foreign brides who recently immigrated to southern Taiwan.
Tsao et al., 2016	Pregnant Taiwanese women (n = 236) and Immigrant women (n=44).	A comparison of Life Stress and Depression between Taiwanese and Immigrant women.
Tung et al., 2020	A sample of (N = 191) pregnant women (79% Black) e.g. Pittsburgh Girls Study.	A study of how life stress and emotional support influence heart rate variability.
Tung et al., 2020	Community-based sample of 200 pregnant women aged 18–24 e.g. the Pittsburgh Girls Study.	An investigation of intimate partner violence during pregnancy and childhood adversity and prenatal emotional distress.

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