

## ABSTRACT

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### The Influence of Family Stress on the Utilization of Preventative Child Health Care

The purpose of this study was to determine the influence of family stress on the utilization of preventative child health care. A convenience sample included 70 parents of children between the ages of 12 months and 14 ½ months of age. The children received their health care in either a private pediatric or family practice clinic setting. The participants completed the Family Inventory of Life Events, Family Crisis Oriented Personal Evaluation Scales, Barriers Scale, and a Demographic Questionnaire. The Medical Record Review Tool was used to determine utilization of preventative child health care. The supporting theoretical framework for the study was McCubbin and Patterson's (1983) Double ABCX Theory of Family Adjustment and Adaptation. Educational level ( $r = 0.251, p = 0.036$ ) and family income ( $r = 0.372, p = 0.002$ ) were the only demographic variables that significantly related to utilization of preventative child health care. Family stress was negatively associated with utilization of preventative child health care, but the association was not statistically significant ( $r = -0.184, p = 0.127$ ). Family resources were positively associated with utilization, but not statistically significantly associated ( $r = 0.180, p = 0.136$ ). Barriers were also associated positively with utilization, but not statistically significant ( $r = 0.089, p = 0.463$ ). Comparison of 2 models for explaining utilization revealed a best model that included family income, family ethnicity, barriers, family stress, and family resources ( $R^2 = .214, R^2_{adj} = 0.153, F = 3.485, p = 0.008$ ). The findings show support for family stress and family resources as influencing factors in the utilization of preventative child health care.