

Health

Social network matters

Mom's friendships may be good for brains of babies

NEW YORK, March 4, (RTRS): When new mothers have friends ready to step in and help them, they have toddlers who score better on cognitive tests than the babies of women with smaller social support networks, a US study suggests.

Strong social ties to friends and family have long been linked to better behavioral and physical health outcomes for adults. And plenty of previous research also indicates that infants' and toddlers' bonds with caregivers can have a lasting impact on children's emotional, intellectual and social development.

But less is known about how the caregivers' own social connections might influence early childhood cognitive development.

Assessments

For the current study, researchers examined data on 1,082 mother-child pairs. They questioned women about their family structure, friendships and relationships in their communities and also looked at test results from cognitive assessments done when kids were 2 years old.

Overall, mothers had an average of 3.5 friends in their social support networks. When they had more, their kids had higher cognitive test scores than when they had fewer.

"Outside the family context, mothers with larger social networks may be able to draw on resources from those networks that alleviate some of the burdens associated with parenting," said study co-author Kaja LeWinn, a psychiatry researcher at the University of California, San Francisco.

"This may include emotional support, tangible support in the form of babysitting or help with errands, and the transfer of knowledge around high-quality day care or other childhood programs," LeWinn said by email. "These resources may reduce parenting stress and improve maternal mental health, both of which are positively associated with child cognitive development."

About 75 percent of the mothers in the study had fewer than six people in their family network, including all adults and children living in their homes. Mothers with larger families had kids with lower cognitive test scores than women with smaller families, the study found.

Almost 60 percent of the mothers lived with the fathers of their children and knew lots of people in their neighborhoods. These two factors didn't appear to influence children's test scores after researchers also accounted for poverty levels.

All of the families in the study lived in the area around Memphis, Tennessee, and it is possible that results might be different elsewhere.

The study wasn't a controlled experiment designed to prove whether or how mothers' social support networks might directly affect children's cognitive development.

The researchers accounted for some factors that might influence child cognitive development, including mother's age and IQ, father's education level and the child's birth weight. But they did not have data to assess other personal differences, such as history of depression, between mothers with large networks of friends and those with fewer.

Also:

NEW YORK: Newborns who don't get baths right away may be more likely to be exclusively breastfed than infants who get whisked away to be washed soon after delivery, a US study suggests.

Pediatricians recommend that mothers exclusively breastfeed infants until at least 6 months of age because it can reduce babies' risk of ear and respiratory infections, sudden infant death syndrome, allergies, childhood obesity and diabetes. While breast milk itself is linked to many of these health benefits, so is the skin-to-skin contact that happens when babies nurse.



A group photo from the event

Over 80 valued donors contribute to the noble cause

TMCA holds blood donation in honor of Kuwait National Day

KUWAIT CITY, March 4: Tamilnadu Muslim Cultural Association (TMCA) is a pioneer Indian association established in Kuwait in the year 1995 and registered at the Embassy of India. Since then it has been serving the most needy people at large irrespective of caste, creed and color. TMCA has been conducting blood donation camp during the last fourteen consecutive years especially on the occasions of Kuwait's National Day and Liberation Day as one of its aims and objectives, creating awareness amongst its members, the need for donating blood. Accordingly, a special blood donation camp was held on Feb 25 at Central Blood Bank in Jabriya honoring Kuwait's 58th National Day and 28th Liberation Day.

Tamilnadu Muslim Cultural Association (TMCA) and its members, particularly its Co-ordination Council, under the guidance of its executive body, who dedicated themselves to volunteering camp activities, and members representing other brotherly associations in Kuwait, extended their whole-hearted support with all enthusiasm honoring the occasions.

The donors started donating blood between 8:30 am and 1:00 pm. The official inauguration program commenced at 10:30 am sharp at the main Lobby at

Central Blood Bank, Jabriya in the presence of Chief Guest Sanjeev Saklani, Second Secretary, Embassy of India, Kuwait.

Brother Zahiruddin, one of the founder-members of TMCA and its current principal coordinator, initiated the program and staged the maestro in administering the whole ceremony. The program began with recitation of verses from the Holy Quran by Moulvi, Mohammad Ali Rashadi. Brother Abdul Razack, from Chennai, sang few patriotic songs in Arabic, honouring Kuwait National Day in the presence of audiences with much applause.

Brother Thambidurai, alias, Abdul Mohamed, Secretary-General, gave a welcome speech. He welcomed all guests, donors, volunteers, members of the association, office bearers and representatives of brotherly associations. He mentioned in his welcome speech that the presence of guests to the blood donation camp resonate the aims and objectives of TMCA. He further explained the need for blood donation and how such a voluntary and altruistic action of donors saves lives of people in need of blood.

Brother Karaikal S.M. Arif Maricar, President of TMCA gave an excellent presidential address. In his address, in

Tamil and English, he spoke in brief highlighting TMCA's innumerable activities and noble services rendered to the benefit of the society with his high vision of taking TMCA to the forefront and as a good model.

Chief guest address was delivered by Sanjeev Saklani, Second Secretary, (Press, Information, Culture and Education Wing) from our esteemed Embassy of India. He, in his speech, encouraged blood donation and appreciated TMCA's continuous efforts in organizing such blood donation camps and other events for the benefit of the society.

Brother Abubacker Siddik, Chairman, Supreme Cargo & Travels, sponsor of the event, felicitated the event, appreciating TMCA efforts in taking up many community services for the well-being of its community members.

Brother Abdul Wahab Rumane and Brother Mahabooob from Federation of Indian Muslim Associations (FIMA), and Dr Eman Ghabour from Jabriya Central Blood Bank felicitated the event appreciating TMCA efforts, to make it very useful for humanity.

Pakkir Mohamed Al-Thafi, well-known Islamic orator from Tamilnadu, who just arrived in Kuwait, enthusiastically reached our venue, knowing about this humanity event taking place,

honouring the National day. In his brief speech, he emphasized the importance of voluntary blood donation stating that whosoever saves a human life, save the life of whole mankind.

On behalf of TMCA, a special memento was presented to Blood Bank administration by Sanjeev Saklani and special guests, in the presence of TMCA executive committee as a token of appreciation and thanking their continuous support and services on this day.

Around 80 valued donors turned out to make it as a remarkable one donating blood expressing their humanitarian spirit.

Certificate of appreciation were also awarded to all donors and volunteers acknowledging their valuable participation and support to make this noble event a grand success for the sake of Allah.

Kambali Mohamed Basheer, one of the founder-members of TMCA, Al-Mass Musthafa, former TMCA president, and TMCA advisors, former executives and heads and representatives of various brotherly associations were present gracing this event. Distribution of special pack of refreshments to donors was sponsored by Brother Abubacker Siddik, Chairman of Supreme Cargo & Travels.

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