

Letters to the Editor

RE: “INVITED COMMENTARY: THE DISILLUSIONMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL ORIGINS OF HEALTH AND DISEASE (DOHAD) EPIDEMIOLOGY”

We were surprised by the first article in the January issue of the *American Journal of Epidemiology*. With the title “Invited Commentary: The Disillusionment of Developmental Origins of Health and Disease (DOHAD) Epidemiology” (1), we anticipated a broad discussion of epidemiology in DOHAD and a critique of the concept. Instead, we read a commentary on a 2018 paper by Masarwa et al. (2). The commentary notes that this systematic review was not very informative.

We do not understand how criticism of an article on a specific topic could justify a title indicative of disillusionment with the epidemiology of DOHAD in its entirety, especially as the DOHAD concept focuses on developmental exposures *other* than teratology (3). The authors of the commentary themselves note that their criticism of the DOHAD concept is confined to medication use during pregnancy, but their concluding paragraph, which is dismissive of DOHAD, bears no relevance to their opinion of the article. The commentary’s title, while possibly reflecting the opinion of the authors, misrepresents the contents of the commentary, and we ask that it be amended and an erratum published.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

H.I., K.G., C.C., J.B., and M.B. are supported wholly or in part by the Medical Research Council. K.G. is also supported by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR Senior Investigator Award NF-SI-0515-10042) and the British Heart Foundation (grant RG/15/17/3174). M.H. is supported by the British Heart Foundation. D.S. is supported by the Canada Research Chairs Program. L.P. is supported by King’s College London and Tommy’s Charity.

All of the authors are members of the International Society for Developmental Origins of Health and Disease. K.G. is the Treasurer, C.C. was a founding Trustee and is a previous member of the DOHAD Council, M.H. is a past President, C.F. is a past Secretary and a Trustee, M.B. is a Trustee, D.S. is the current Secretary, and L.P. is the current President.

REFERENCES

1. Gilman SE, Hornig M. Invited commentary: the disillusionment of developmental origins of health and disease (DOHAD) epidemiology. *Am J Epidemiol*. 2020; 189(1):1–5.
2. Masarwa R, Levine H, Gorelik E, et al. Prenatal exposure to acetaminophen and risk for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and autistic spectrum disorder: a systematic review, meta-analysis, and meta-regression analysis of cohort studies. *Am J Epidemiol*. 2018;187(8):1817–1827.
3. Godfrey KM, Gluckman PD, Hanson MA. Developmental origins of metabolic disease: life course and intergenerational perspectives. *Trends Endocrinol Metab*. 2010;21(4):199–205.

Hazel Inskip^{1,2}, Keith Godfrey^{1,2}, Cyrus Cooper^{1,2}, Mark Hanson^{2,3}, Caroline Fall¹, Janis Baird^{1,2}, Mary Barker^{1,2}, Deborah Sloboda⁴, and Lucilla Poston⁵
 (e-mail: hmi@mrc.soton.ac.uk)

¹ MRC Lifecourse Epidemiology Unit, University of Southampton, Southampton General Hospital, Southampton, United Kingdom

² NIHR Southampton Biomedical Research Centre, University of Southampton and University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust, Southampton, United Kingdom

³ Human Development and Health, University of Southampton, Southampton General Hospital, Southampton, United Kingdom

⁴ McMaster University Health Sciences Centre, Faculty of Health Sciences, McMaster University, Hamilton, ON, Canada

⁵ Department of Women and Children’s Health, School of Life Course Sciences, King’s College London, London, United Kingdom

DOI: 10.1093/aje/kwaa100; Advance Access publication: June 22, 2020

© The Author(s) 2020. Published by Oxford University Press on behalf of the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health 2020. This work is written by (a) US Government employee(s) and is in the public domain in the US.

THE AUTHORS REPLY

We appreciate Inskip et al.’s interest in the title of our commentary (1). We wish they had also engaged with us on the issues we discussed in it.

Inskip et al. suggest that we were dismissive of the developmental origins of health and disease (DOHAD) hypothesis. To the contrary, our conclusion was that “DOHAD research