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**BBC**

**Cry-baby 'link to behavioural problems'**

Excessive crying as a baby may hint at behavioural problems later in life.

Babies who cry excessively and have problems feeding and sleeping have a greater risk of serious behavioural problems later in life, say scientists.

One in five babies has symptoms that could lead to conditions such as ADHD, according to research [published in Archives of Disease in Childhood](http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/adc.2010.191312).

The review of previous studies looked at nearly 17,000 children.

A child-health expert said it would be wrong for parents to be "overly alarmed" by the results.

Crying in babies is normal, but some cry "excessively" after the age of three months for reasons other than colic.

An international group of researchers looked at this as well as problems eating and sleeping.

By comparing data from 22 studies from 1987 to 2006, they found a link between these issues and problems later in life.

Behaviour problems :

There was an increased risk of ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder), anxiety and depression as well as aggressive behaviour.

The research showed that a baby with more than one risk factor was even more likely to develop behavioural problems.

Professor Dieter Wolke, from the University of Warwick, told the BBC: "It is about a 100% increase in risk, a doubling of risk of behavioural problems with excessive crying, sleeping and eating problems."

Jane Valente, a consultant paediatrician at Great Ormond Street Hospital, said: "It would be wrong for people to get overly alarmed.

I don't think on the basis of this report people should be going to their GPs.

"If a baby is not behaving like other babies it is probably worth discussing with a midwife or health visitor."

The study cannot tell if issues as a baby cause behavioural problems later in life: they could be an early symptom of those later problems.

Professor Wolke said while there were treatments for problem crying, feeding and sleeping in babies, there was no research assessing their impact later in life.

He added: "If you could prevent behavioural problems with an early intervention, in a public health-sense it could be very important."

Professor Mitch Blair, officer for health promotion at The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, said: "It is an important study."

He said parents were very good at knowing when something was wrong with their children and that the study "really reinforces the need for attention at an early stage to prevent issues later in childhood".

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| The Mirror  Date: May 17, 2011  word count: 405  Sentences: 21  **STRESSED-OUT BABIES CAN BECOME PROBLEM KIDS**  Babies who cry a lot could turn into problem children, even developing certain behavioural conditions such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.  It seems that persistent crying in children can lead to a whole spectrum of disorders in childhood including ADHD, anxiety, depression, withdrawal, aggression, destructive behaviour and temper tantrums.  In the study, besides persistent crying, babies had feeding and sleeping difficulties.  It seems the harder a baby finds settling itself, the more likely the baby will grow up to become a child with behavioural problems.  The report was produced by the universities of Warwick in the UK, Basel in Switzerland and Bochum in Germany.  Researchers analysed 22 studies carried out between 1987 and 2006, involving nearly 1,700 children.  What interests me is why babies cry persistently at all.  Research that shows early brain development can make all the difference to a baby's happiness in later life may be the answer.  The kind of emotional experiences a baby has, starting in the womb, are embedded in her system for life.  Leaving a newborn to cry is particularly dangerous because, if ignored, it results in high levels of stress hormones, which dampen the formation of a healthy brain that can deal with powerful emotions.  A baby is born expecting to have stress managed for her by parents.  Stress hormone levels will remain low if a parent keeps the child content by holding, stroking, nuzzling, whispering, laughing and feeding it.  However, as a baby's emotions are unstable, those hormones can shoot up if there is no caring adult to take care of the child's emotional needs, or one that's able to quieten the baby as required.  It's this research that makes me a firm believer in never letting a baby cry.  The new report does not reveal if persistently crying babies were comforted and taught to deal with stressful moments by learning to comfort themselves.  But caring for a crying baby results in an outpouring of love hormones that counteract the stress in the baby's brain - and the baby will remember this calming sensation.  After much comforting, the baby will be able to remember that feeling and produce the love hormones for herself.  Babies who can do this do not tend to grow up with behaviour disorders.  They turn out to be affectionate, friendly, able to share, outgoing, social, smiley children - and they often do well at school.   |  | | --- | | So why would anyone let a baby cry? http://www.lexisnexis.com/uk/nexis/images/s.gif | | http://www.lexisnexis.com/uk/nexis/images/s.gif | |