Description of Research	Dr. Davis' major areas of interest are: • The early/developmental origins of health and disease • The developmental consequences of gestational exposure to stress • Individual differences in development of HPA axis regulation • The influence of stress and stress hormones on brain development • Sex differences in vulnerability to early life stress The multidisciplinary research that is conducted in her lab examines biological and social/behavioral processes in human pregnancy and in fetal, infant and child development. This research is addresses a major health issue involving the role of early experiences in determining the risk for health and disease across the lifespan. Specifically, her program of research evaluates the way that prenatal exposure to maternal psychosocial stress and stress hormones is incorporated into the developmental program and the influence this has on adaptation to the postnatal world. She has used two complementary approaches to evaluate the influence of prenatal stress and stress hormones for development. The first approach evaluates the effects of prenatal exposure to synthetic glucocorticoids and the second identifies the consequences of natural variations in maternal psychosocial stress and stress hormones. These projects, supported by grants from NICHD and NIMH, investigate the role that prenatal exposure to stress and stress hormones play in determining individual differences in stress and emotional regulation, cognitive functioning and brain development.
Methodology	Phenomenology; Biomarkers: Human and Animal Models
Clinical and special developmental populations	Anxiety; Co-Morbid Medical Illnesses; Child; Depression; Infant; Pregnancy
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