

POSTER: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MOTOR AND LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT IN INFANCY: IS IT ALREADY PRESENT IN THE FIRST MONTHS?

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INTRODUCTION. Recent studies have reported a close relationship between motor skills and language skills in infancy. The onset-age of motor milestones such as sitting and walking has been associated with receptive and productive vocabulary measured around 12 months or later. Our study investigated whether the relation between movement and language is already present in the first months of life. **METHOD.** 38 Italian infants (20 females) participated. With regard to motor development we measured the onset-age of head-control (HC), rolling (ROL), sitting (SIT), crawling (CRAW) and standing (STAND); we also assessed the same motor skills at 4 and 8 months using EMQ - Early Motor Questionnaire (Libertus & Landa 2013). With regard to language skills we assessed Gestures (G) and Communicative Behaviors (CB) at 8 months using PVB (The McArthur-Bates Communicative Development Inventory - Italian version). A set of bivariate correlations between motor milestones, language skills and sociodemographic variables allowed to identify significant associations and, therefore, potential predictors of language abilities; they were used in subsequent regression analyses. **RESULTS.** Preliminary linear regression (N=20) showed that CRAW and STAND significantly predicted CBsize at 8 months; in particular: CBsize was predicted by both onset-age of CRAW [$R^2 = .23$; $F(1,18)=5.32$, $p = .033$] and CRAWscore at 8 months on EMQ [$R^2 = .21$; $F(1,18)=4.87$, $p = .041$], and STANDscore at 8 months on EQM [$R^2 = .33$; $F(1,18)=9.01$, $p = .008$]. Sociodemographic variables and gender individually considered were not predictive.