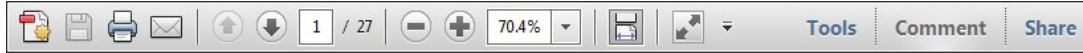
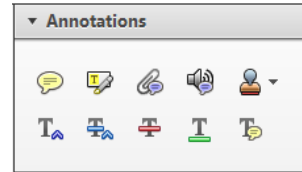


Once you have Acrobat Reader open on your computer, click on the [Comment](#) tab at the right of the toolbar:



This will open up a panel down the right side of the document. The majority of tools you will use for annotating your proof will be in the [Annotations](#) section, pictured opposite. We've picked out some of these tools below:



1. [Replace \(Ins\)](#) Tool – for replacing text.

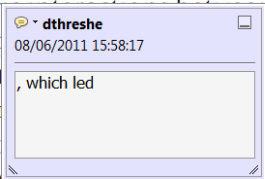


Strikes a line through text and opens up a text box where replacement text can be entered.

How to use it

- Highlight a word or sentence.
- Click on the [Replace \(Ins\)](#) icon in the Annotations section.
- Type the replacement text into the blue box that appears.

standard framework for the analysis of microeconomic activity. Nevertheless, it also led to the development of a new paradigm of strategic behavior. The number of competitors in the industry is that the structure of the main components of the model, at the micro level, are exogenous. The important works on this by Shirone (M henceforth) we open the 'black b



2. [Strikethrough \(Del\)](#) Tool – for deleting text.



Strikes a red line through text that is to be deleted.

How to use it

- Highlight a word or sentence.
- Click on the [Strikethrough \(Del\)](#) icon in the Annotations section.

there is no room for extra profits as mark-ups are zero and the number of firms (net) values are not determined by market clearing. Blanchard ~~and Kiyotaki~~ (1987), in a perfect competition in general equilibrium model of aggregate demand and supply in the classical framework assuming monopolistic competition, an exogenous number of firms

3. [Add note to text](#) Tool – for highlighting a section to be changed to bold or italic.



Highlights text in yellow and opens up a text box where comments can be entered.

How to use it

- Highlight the relevant section of text.
- Click on the [Add note to text](#) icon in the Annotations section.
- Type instruction on what should be changed regarding the text into the yellow box that appears.

dynamic responses of mark-ups consistent with the VAR evidence

sation by Markov. The VAR model is used to estimate the parameters of the VAR model. The VAR model is used to estimate the parameters of the VAR model. The VAR model is used to estimate the parameters of the VAR model.



4. [Add sticky note](#) Tool – for making notes at specific points in the text.

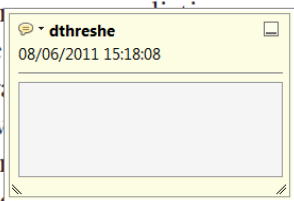


Marks a point in the proof where a comment needs to be highlighted.

How to use it

- Click on the [Add sticky note](#) icon in the Annotations section.
- Click at the point in the proof where the comment should be inserted.
- Type the comment into the yellow box that appears.

and supply shocks. Most of the literature on this topic is based on the VAR model. The VAR model is used to estimate the parameters of the VAR model. The VAR model is used to estimate the parameters of the VAR model.



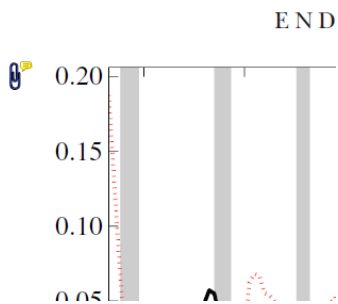
5. **Attach File** Tool – for inserting large amounts of text or replacement figures.



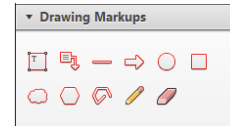
Inserts an icon linking to the attached file in the appropriate place in the text.

How to use it

- Click on the **Attach File** icon in the Annotations section.
- Click on the proof to where you'd like the attached file to be linked.
- Select the file to be attached from your computer or network.
- Select the colour and type of icon that will appear in the proof. Click OK.

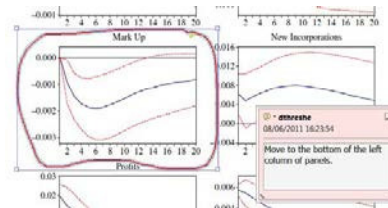


6. **Drawing Markups** Tools – for drawing shapes, lines and freeform annotations on proofs and commenting on these marks. Allows shapes, lines and freeform annotations to be drawn on proofs and for comment to be made on these marks.



How to use it

- Click on one of the shapes in the Drawing Markups section.
- Click on the proof at the relevant point and draw the selected shape with the cursor.
- To add a comment to the drawn shape, move the cursor over the shape until an arrowhead appears.
- Double click on the shape and type any text in the red box that appears.



PAPER

Effect of socioeconomic status (SES) disparity on neural development in female African-American infants at age 1 month

Laura M. Betancourt,¹ Brian Avants,² Martha J. Farah,³ Nancy L. Brodsky,¹
Jue Wu,² Manzar Ashtari⁴ and Hallam Hurt¹

1. Department of Neonatology, The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, USA

2. Department of Radiology, University of Pennsylvania, USA

3. Department of Psychology, University of Pennsylvania, USA

4. Department of Radiology, The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, USA

Abstract

There is increasing interest in both the cumulative and long-term impact of early life adversity on brain structure and function, especially as the brain is both highly vulnerable and highly adaptive during childhood. Relationships between SES and neural development have been shown in children older than age 2 years. Less is known regarding the impact of SES on neural development in children before age 2. This paper examines the effect of SES, indexed by income-to-needs (ITN) and maternal education, on cortical gray, deep gray, and white matter volumes in term, healthy, appropriate for gestational age, African-American, female infants. At 5 weeks postnatal age, unsedated infants underwent MRI (3.0T Siemens Verio scanner, 32-channel head coil). Images were segmented based on a locally constructed template. Utilizing hierarchical linear regression, SES effects on MRI volumes were examined. In this cohort of healthy African-American female infants of varying SES, lower SES was associated with smaller cortical gray and deep gray matter volumes. These SES effects on neural outcome at such a young age build on similar studies of older children, suggesting that the biological embedding of adversity may occur very early in development.

Research highlights

- Utilizes a birth cohort of term, healthy, appropriate for gestational age, African-American, female infants.
- Examines relation between SES and cortical volume in infants at age 4–6 weeks.
- Lower SES associated with smaller cortical gray and deep gray matter volumes.
- Findings push back the age at which SES effects are observed, from early childhood to early infancy.

Introduction

Childhood socioeconomic status (SES) is associated with lifelong mental health and intellectual attainment, presumably through its effects on neural development. On

average, poor children differ from their higher SES counterparts, achieving less success in school (Nisbett, Aronson, Blair, Dickens, Flynn *et al.*, 2012; Sirin, 2005) and suffering at a higher rate from mental disorders including ADHD, anxiety, and depression (Goodman, 1999; Kessler, Berglund, Demler, Jin, Merikangas *et al.*, 2005). In evaluations of SES effects on neurocognitive skills of school-age children the largest disparities are found in executive function, memory and language, skills that are linked to academic success (Farah, Shera, Savage, Betancourt, Giannetta *et al.*, 2006; Landry, Smith & Swank, 2002; Noble, McCandliss & Farah, 2007; Noble, Norman & Farah, 2005). Similarly, in a limited number of studies, SES effects on cognitive function in young children at toddler and preschool ages have shown differences in language (Fernald, Marchman & Weisleder, 2013; Wild, Betancourt, Brodsky & Hurt,

Address for correspondence: Laura M. Betancourt, Neonatology Research, Department of Pediatrics, 3535 Market Street, Room 1433, Philadelphia, PA 19104, USA; e-mail: betancourt1@email.chop.edu

2013) and executive function (Lipina, Martelli, Vuelta & Colombo, 2005). Assessment of SES effects on these skills is more common at these older ages; however, it is likely that SES effects on development are present earlier in infancy, during the first year of life, when development proceeds most rapidly (Holland, Chang, Ernst, Curran, Buchthal *et al.*, 2014).

Recent brain imaging studies have investigated SES effects on neural development utilizing MRI measures of gray and white matter, both of which have established associations with neurocognitive abilities. Positive relations between SES and gray matter volume have been reported in some studies (Hanson, Chandra, Wolfe & Pollak, 2011; Hanson, Hair, Shen, Shi, Gilmore *et al.*, 2013; Luby, Belden, Botteron, Marrus, Harms *et al.*, 2013) but not others (Brain-Development-Cooperative-Group, 2012). Similarly, findings regarding SES effects on white matter vary, with some investigators reporting effects (Luby *et al.*, 2013) and others reporting no effects (Brain-Development-Cooperative-Group, 2012). Analyses of repeated assessments of frontal gray matter volumes between ages 5 months and 4 years (mean age of first scan: 13.5 months) have shown a positive relationship with SES (Hanson *et al.*, 2013). Voxel-based morphometry (VBM) and region of interest (ROI) analyses have demonstrated regional gray matter correlates of SES in children. While analyses of a large cohort of children aged 4–18 years found no SES effects on specific lobar volumes (Brain-Development-Cooperative-Group, 2012), cortical thickness in certain prefrontal regions was smaller for the lower SES participants in the sample (Lawson, Duda, Avants, Wu & Farah, 2013; Noble, Houston, Kan & Sowell, 2012). Raizada *et al.* (2008) utilized scans collected from 14 5-year olds to detect a marginally significant positive relationship between SES and gray matter volume in the left inferior frontal gyrus (IFG) (Raizada, Richards, Meltzoff & Kuhl, 2008). In 5–17-year-olds, Noble and colleagues (2012) found no main effect of SES; however, they did find an interaction between SES and age with progressively larger left IFG volumes for high SES children as their age increased. Overall, ROI analyses have documented SES differences in hippocampal, amygdala, middle temporal gyri, left fusiform and right inferior occipito-temporal gyri (Hanson *et al.*, 2011; Hanson, Nacewicz, Sutterer, Cayo, Schaefer *et al.*, 2015; Jednorog, Altarelli, Monzalvo, Fluss, Dubois *et al.*, 2012; Luby *et al.*, 2013; Noble *et al.*, 2012). These studies taken together provide consensus that SES influences developing neuroanatomy in children; less is known about this relationship in younger infants and toddlers.

Given the findings in cohorts of older children, it is likely that SES influences neuroanatomy earlier in

development. In the first year of life neural development is dynamic, characterized by rapidly changing and complex patterns of growth in gray matter (Gilmore, Lin, Prastawa, Looney, Vetsa *et al.*, 2007; Holland *et al.*, 2014; Knickmeyer, Gouttard, Kang, Evans, Wilber *et al.*, 2008) and of myelination and synaptic pruning in white matter tracts (Dubois, Dehaene-Lambertz, Kulikova, Poupon, Hüppi *et al.*, 2014; Uda, Matsui, Tanaka, Uematsu, Miura *et al.*, 2015). A number of investigators have shown that early neural structures are the foundation for both concurrent and later cognitive processes (Can, Richards & Kuhl, 2013; Jednorog *et al.*, 2012; Spann, Bansal, Rosen & Peterson, 2014). For example, Short, Elison, Goldman, Styner, Gu *et al.* (2013) and Deoni, O’Muircheartaigh, Elison, Walker, Doernberg *et al.* (2014) report positive associations between myelination of white matter tracts and infant working memory and language function in the first year of life. These longitudinal studies provide evidence that larger volumes of gray and white matter, assessed using MRI, are associated with better cognitive function in later years (Can *et al.*, 2013; Jednorog *et al.*, 2012; Spann *et al.*, 2014). Despite the emerging consensus that early neural development is highly responsive to environmental variation, including variation in SES levels (Hackman, Farah & Meaney, 2010), few studies have specifically examined the impact of SES on neural development and behavior at very young ages.

Although additional research is needed to firmly establish the existence of structural brain correlates of childhood SES and to identify specific patterns of areas affected, the available research supports the conclusion that SES does affect brain development in childhood. To date, however, such investigations have utilized cohorts of children who were both older than 2 years and were mostly non-poor. Given that neural development during the first year of life is rapid and dynamic (Gilmore *et al.*, 2007; Holland *et al.*, 2014), it is likely that environmental differences may shape brain development earlier than previously reported. In contrast to the question of whether SES has structural brain correlates in childhood, which has a provisional answer, two related questions remain entirely open. First, at what age are effects of SES on brain structure detectable and, second, are there differences within the lower range of SES? The present study is the first to address these two questions.

The first question, concerning the age at which effects of SES are manifest in child brain structure, is relevant to the developmental origins of morphological differences. In a cross-sectional investigation of neural development between ages 3 and 20 years, results showed that income and education were associated with increasing surface area but not cortical thickness, with the largest effects

1 among those at lowest income levels (Noble, Houston,
 2 Brito, Bartsch, Kan *et al.*, 2015). The youngest children
 3 analyzed for SES effects on brain structure are in a
 4 cohort of children aged 5 months to 4 years (Hanson
 5 *et al.*, 2013). Visual inspection of the growth curves for
 6 total gray matter for this sample of low, middle, and high
 7 income children shows overlap at 5 months of age and
 8 divergence only later, with the low income group
 9 separating from middle and high income groups at
 10 about 1 year. However, few subjects in this sample were
 11 5 months old; the mean age of subjects at the first of the
 12 longitudinally collected scans was 13.5 months. In addition,
 13 curves were fit to data from multiple ages, so that
 14 the values shown at age 5 months were influenced by
 15 measurements at later ages. Presumably for these reasons,
 16 the authors did not state any conclusions regarding
 17 the age at which effects of SES emerge. There are no
 18 other reports of SES and brain structure before
 19 toddlerhood.

20 The second question addressed here concerns the
 21 effects of variation along the lower range of SES versus
 22 variation from low to high SES. In contrast to SES,
 23 which may refer to the full range of variation in income,
 24 education and occupational status, poverty refers to the
 25 very lowest levels of financial status with accompanying
 26 social factors including low educational attainment. For
 27 both policy and research purposes, poverty is typically
 28 gauged by the ratio of income-to-needs (ITN), with the
 29 US 'poverty line' defined as an ITN of 1. No previous
 30 study of brain structure has compared children who were
 31 poor, by this criterion, with non-poor children; indeed
 32 the largest studies to date utilize a sample that was
 33 predominantly middle class (Brain-Development-Coop-
 34 erative-Group, 2012; Hanson *et al.*, 2011; Hanson *et al.*,
 35 2013; Lange, Froimowitz, Bigler & Lainhart, 2010;
 36 Lawson *et al.*, 2013). Furthermore, stringent exclusion-
 37 ary criteria for this sample eliminated children dispro-
 38 portionately from lower SES levels (Waber, De Moor,
 39 Forbes, Almlil, Botteron *et al.*, 2007), raising questions
 40 about the typicality of the lower SES children (Hanson
 41 *et al.*, 2013). An exception published by Noble *et al.*
 42 (2015) showed increased sensitivity to SES influence
 43 along the lower range of (a relatively broad distribution)
 44 of family income and education. Taken together, the
 45 samples cited above are of broader ranges of SES, with
 46 none including primarily poor and near-poor children.
 47 The sample studied for the current report is approxi-
 48 mately half poor and half near-poor. With 22% of
 49 American children classified as poor according to the
 50 Federal standards (Canada, 2014), utilization of a cohort
 51 of primarily the lower SES participants rather than those
 52 from middle and upper ranges allows for a comparison
 53 that is both socially and scientifically relevant.

On the basis of the research reviewed above, we
 hypothesized an early association of SES and cortical
 gray matter volume in infants at 1 month of age. In
 addition we analyzed the association between SES and
 deep gray matter and white matter volumes. To limit the
 number of confounding variables in a small-sized cohort,
 we restricted gender and ethnicity to only female
 African-American infants.

Methods

Participant recruitment and inclusion criteria

Mothers and their infants were recruited at delivery from
 a single hospital for a larger study of the effects of SES
 on both neural and cognitive development. Mothers were
 eligible if they were between 18 and 45 years of age and
 declared that both parents were American-born
 African-American. Potential participants were excluded
 if they were non-English speaking, had significant
 psychiatric diagnoses, were enrolled in an alcohol or
 drug rehabilitation program, or had significant medical
 or obstetrical conditions as defined by the obstetrical
 service. Infants eligible for inclusion were female single-
 tons born at 38–42 weeks gestation, with birth weights
 appropriate for gestational age and 5-minute Apgar
 scores ≥ 8 . Infants were excluded if they were diagnosed
 with any condition associated with developmental delay,
 were hospitalized more than 3 days, failed the hearing
 screen, or were not discharged to their biologic mother.
 Target enrollment was 30 low SES infants and mothers
 and 30 higher SES infants and mothers. Upon enroll-
 ment all participants signed informed consent approved
 by the Institutional Review Board of the Children's
 Hospital of Philadelphia.

Socioeconomic status (SES): income-to-needs (ITN) and education

SES was indexed by ITN and maternal education. Low
 SES (poor group) was defined as ITN at or below
 government poverty line plus no more than high school
 education for either parent. Higher SES (near-poor) had
 ITN above the poverty line plus at least a high school
 education for both parents. The ITN variable was based
 on the 2013 US government official poverty definition
 (US Census Bureau, 2013) and was ascertained by
 maternal self-report of household income and composi-
 tion. Mothers and infants were categorized into one of
 five ITN categories according to income and family size.
 For example, the poverty threshold for a family of two is
 \$15,510 per year. Families making less than this amount

are classified as below the poverty line (ITN = 1). A family of two making \$62,040 per year is classified in the higher end of the range at 400% above the poverty line (ITN = 5). The remaining three ITN categories were distributed between the low and higher income range. Education was ascertained from maternal self-report and ranged from some high school through graduate school. An SES Composite score was computed by rescaling ITN values to match the scale for values of maternal education and summing them, giving these two dimensions of SES equal weight. Because nearly two-thirds of the infants in the current cohort were living in households without their biological father, we used maternal but not paternal education in the composite (Entwisle & Astone, 1994). The current report includes neural data from the infant participants collected at age 1 month using MRI.

Image acquisition and processing

Infants underwent MRI scans at approximately 5 weeks post estimated date of confinement (EDC). No sedation was utilized. Appointments were scheduled for parent-reported infant nap times. Infants were fed, swaddled, and acclimated to the scanner room before placement in the scanner. High resolution T1- and T2-weighted and diffusion-weighted images were obtained utilizing a 3T Siemens Verio Scanner with a 32-channel head coil.

All subjects' images were converted into anonymous Neuroimaging Informatics Technology Initiative (Nifti) format. A population-specific template was built using data from 15 participants with high quality data. The final template was labeled with six spatial probability functions (priors) that defined the voxel-wise probability of six distinct tissue/anatomical classes: cortical gray (includes hippocampus and amygdala), deep gray (includes thalamus and basal ganglia), white matter, brainstem, cerebellum, and cerebrospinal fluid (Shi, Yap, Wu, Jia, Gilmore *et al.*, 2011). Our method iteratively optimized both template shape and appearance to estimate an average brain that best represented the expected anatomy in the cohort (Tustison, Cook, Klein, Song, Das *et al.*, 2014). See Figure 1 for segmentation process illustration. Estimation of hippocampal volume was not performed because variability in qualitative and quantitative aspects of existing manual segmentation protocols leads to significant disagreement in measured volumes of hippocampal and parahippocampal substructures (Yushkevich, Amaral, Augustinack, Bender, Bernstein *et al.*, 2015).

Diffeomorphic image registration (SyN algorithm, implemented in ANTs; Avants, Tustison, Stauffer, Song, Wu *et al.*, 2014; Tustison *et al.*, 2014) was used to map

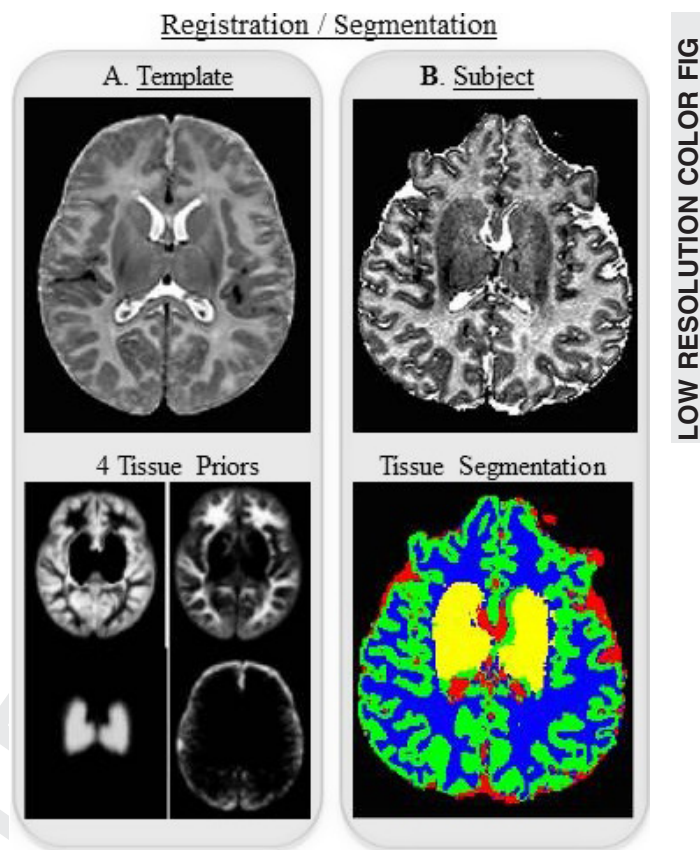


Figure 1 Segmentation process for images from infants at age 5 weeks. Six spatial probability functions (priors) define the voxel-wise probability of distinct tissue/anatomical classes: (1) Cortical Gray (includes the hippocampus and amygdala); (2) Deep Gray (includes thalamus and basal ganglia); (3) White Matter; (4) Brainstem; (5) Cerebellum; and (6) Cerebrospinal Fluid. Column A (left) shows the template and 4 of 6 priors used for segmentation process. Column B (right) shows the subject image before and after segmentation with the priors. Cortical Gray is shown in green. Deep gray is shown in yellow. White matter is shown in blue. CSF is shown in red. Brain stem and cerebellum not shown.

between template and subject space. This mapping was used to transfer the six template prior probability maps into the space of the individual's T2 MRI. T1 and diffusion-weighted MRI also were mapped into the space of the T2 via a low-dimensional registration. These modalities were complemented by the Laplacian of the T2 image to form a rich feature space for basis of 6-tissue multivariate segmentation. The final segmentation procedure incorporated both T2 and T1 features with the probability maps via a Bayesian tissue segmentation algorithm, Atropos (Tustison *et al.*, 2014).

To verify quality, each segmentation was visually inspected, along with the original T1 and T2 data, and

data were reviewed for motion artifact. To assist successful 6-tissue segmentation, we first used joint label fusion to perform brain extraction (MICCAI Society, 2013; Wang, Suh, Das, Pluta, Craige *et al.*, 2013). Final tissue segmentation was performed within this brain mask defined by the labels available from the Makropoulos cohort (Makropoulos, Gousias, Ledig, Aljabar, Serag *et al.*, 2014). The full processing pipeline is publicly available (Avants *et al.*, 2014; Tustison *et al.*, 2014). MRI data for this report include cortical gray, deep gray, and white matter volumes. Examiners were masked to SES status.

Analyses

Preliminary analyses included SES group comparisons of maternal and child characteristics using *t*-tests and chi square analysis. Pearson correlations tested associations between demographic and MRI variables. Main analyses consisted of hierarchical linear regressions using the SES composite as a continuous variable to examine SES effects on neural outcomes. Covariates were birth weight and post-conception age at scan (at this age more predictive of developmental maturity than post-natal age) (Hanson *et al.*, 2013; Martin, Fanaroff & Walsh, 2011). Analyses were performed using SPSS 22.0.

Results

Of 46 scans completed, data from two subjects (both ITN of 1 and maternal high school education) were not utilized due to motion and poor resolution. Characteristics at time of enrollment and MRI are shown in Table 1 for the 44 participants with successful scans (25 Low SES, 19 Higher SES). Low SES mothers were younger than Higher SES mothers and, per enrollment criteria, reported less education. Also per enrollment criteria, ITN category for the Low SES group was 1 and for the Higher SES group was 2 or greater (74% ITN = 2, 26% ITN ≥ 3). Infant birth characteristics and age at time of MRI were similar.

Correlations between cortical gray, deep gray, and white matter volumes and participant characteristics are shown in Table 2. Cortical gray matter volume correlated with the SES Composite, ITN, maternal education, gestational age, birth weight, head circumference and length, and post-conception age at MRI. Deep gray matter volume correlated with the SES Composite, maternal education, birth weight, head circumference and length and post-conception age at MRI. White matter volume correlated with only birth weight, head circumference and post-conception age at time of MRI.

Table 1 Infant characteristics at time of enrollment and MRI by SES group

	Low SES group <i>n</i> = 25	Higher SES group <i>n</i> = 19	<i>p</i> -value
Enrollment characteristics			
Mother's age, yr	24.1 ± 4.9 ^a	27.1 ± 5.6	<.001
ITN			
Below poverty line	25 (100%)	0	
Above the poverty line	0	19 (100%)	
Mother's education			<.001
1. Less than high school	16 (64%) ^b	0	
2. High school/GED	6 (24%)	3 (16%)	
3. Technical/Vocational	3 (12%)	1 (5%)	
4. Some college	0	5 (26%)	
5. Two-year degree	0	5 (26%)	
6. Four-year degree	0	4 (21%)	
7. Some graduate school	0	0	
8. MA, PhD, Professional	0	1 (5%)	
Gestational age, weeks	39.4 ± 1.0	39.6 ± 0.9	.35
Birth weight, kg	3.29 ± 0.44	3.42 ± 0.44	.36
Birth HC ^c , cm	33.5 ± 1.3	34.0 ± 1.4	.33
Birth length, cm	50.2 ± 2.3	50.3 ± 2.3	.91
1-month characteristics			
Age at MRI			
Post-conception, wks	44.7 ± 0.5	45.0 ± 0.9	.17
Post-natal, wks	5.0 ± 0.9	5.0 ± 1.2	.90

^amean ± *SD*, ^b*n* (%); ^cHead circumference.

Table 2 Correlations between cortical volumes and participant characteristics

	Cortical gray matter	Deep gray matter	White matter
SES Composite	0.38 (0.01) ^a	0.34 (0.024)	0.25 (0.096)
Income-to-needs	0.37 (0.014)	0.28 (0.063)	0.11 (0.48)
Maternal education	0.41 (0.006)	0.34 (0.022)	0.22 (0.15)
Paternal education	0.13 (0.40)	0.27 (0.076)	0.22 (0.15)
Maternal age	-0.069 (0.66)	0.16 (0.29)	-0.043 (0.78)
Gestational age	0.30 (0.046)	0.19 (0.214)	0.18 (0.23)
Birth weight	0.64 (0.000)	0.47 (0.001)	0.53 (0.000)
Head circumference	0.64 (0.000)	0.46 (0.002)	0.45 (0.003)
Birth length	0.30 (0.050)	0.31 (0.047)	0.16 (0.32)
Age at MRI			
Post-conception, wks	0.49 (0.001)	0.40 (0.007)	0.48 (0.001)
Post-natal, wks	0.078 (0.61)	0.068 (0.66)	0.12 (0.46)

^aPearson *r* (*p*-value), *n* = 44.

To examine the relations between SES and volumes of cortical gray, deep gray, and white matter, three hierarchical linear regressions were conducted for each outcome, controlling for post-conception age and birth weight (Hanson *et al.*, 2013; Martin *et al.*, 2011). In the first step of each regression, birth weight and post-conception age at MRI were entered stepwise (Model 1). In the second step (Model 2) the SES Composite was added to the regression.

For cortical gray matter, in Model 1, birth weight, but not age at MRI, was retained in the model ($R^2 = 0.38$, $F(1, 42) = 25.17$, $p < .001$). Addition of the SES Composite in Model 2 resulted in a significant increase in variance accounted for by the model ($\Delta R^2 = 0.082$, $F(1, 41) = 6.21$, $p = .017$). In the regression on deep gray matter volume, birth weight but not MRI age was retained in Model 1 ($R^2 = 0.22$, $F(1, 42) = 1.87$, $p = .001$). Adding SES improved the model significantly ($\Delta R^2 = 0.073$, $F(1, 41) = 4.22$, $p = .046$). In the regression for white matter volume, birth weight and MRI age were retained after the stepwise entry in Model 1 ($R^2 = 0.32$, $F(1, 41) = 9.85$, $p < .001$). The addition of SES in Model 2 did not significantly improve the model ($\Delta R^2 = 0.015$, $F(1, 40) = 6.85$, $p = .35$). Table 3 shows

Table 3 Hierarchical linear regression analyses predicting cortical gray matter, deep gray matter and white matter volumes

	Cortical gray matter	Deep gray matter	White matter
Model 1			
Age at MRI*	–	–	0.30 (0.044)
Birth weight	0.61 (.000)**	0.61 (0.000)	0.36 (0.019)
R^2	0.38	0.22	0.32
F (df)	25.17 (1,42)	11.87 (1,42)	9.85 (1,41)
p -value	<.001	.001	<.001
Model 2			
Age at MRI*	–	–	0.27 (0.077)
Birth weight	0.57 (0.000)	0.43 (0.003)	0.35 (0.021)
SES Composite	0.29 (0.017)	0.27 (0.046)	0.13 (0.35)
R^2	0.46	0.29	0.34
ΔR^2	0.082	0.073	0.015
F (df)	6.21 (1,41)	4.22 (1,41)	6.85 (1,40)
p -value	0.017	0.046	0.35

*Post-conception, wks. **Standardized regression coefficient (p -values, 2-tailed). Model 2 Predictor: SES Composite.

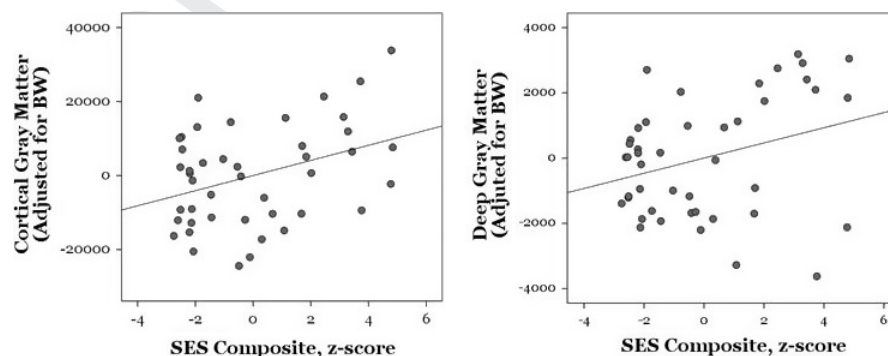


Figure 2 SES predicts MRI volumes at age 1 month. In final models, higher levels of SES were associated with larger cortical gray and deep gray matter volumes. X-axis shows z-scores for the SES Composite. Y-axis shows residual values of each dependent variable after adjustment for birth weight.

the regression statistics for the models for each outcome. Figure 2 illustrates the positive relationships between SES and cortical gray and deep gray matter volumes adjusted for variables retained in the final models.

We did not examine the effects of SES components, income and education on brain volumes independently of one another as these two variables were highly correlated ($r = 0.86$, $p < .001$).

Discussion

In this cohort of healthy term female African-American infants, MRI showed SES-dependent differences in gray matter volume at the young age of 5 weeks with effects being present along the lower range of the distribution of SES. Both cortical gray matter, which includes the cortex of the two hemispheres and hippocampi, and deep gray matter, which includes the thalamus and basal ganglia, were significantly smaller in low SES infants. No difference was observed in white matter volume. While low SES is associated with lower birth weights and increased risk for prematurity, both of which are closely linked to brain development (Aber, Bennett, Conley & Li, 1997; Osofsky, 1974; Parker, Greer & Zuckerman, 1988), the present results are from a cohort of healthy term infants showing SES effects on brain development independent of birth weight and post-conception age.

The results reported here both add to a growing consensus that SES impacts brain development and push back the age at which such effects can be observed from early childhood to early infancy. To our knowledge no other studies have examined this relationship as early as 5 weeks of age. Two studies, however, have reported functional brain activity differences within the first year of life: Tomalski *et al.* (2013) reported EEG differences

1 between low and middle SES infants between 6 and
 2 9 months of age; Gao *et al.* (2015) reported marginal
 3 effects of SES on fMRI resting functional connectivity at
 4 6 months of age (Gao, Alcauter, Elton, Hernandez-
 5 Castillo, Smith *et al.*, 2015; Tomalski, Moore, Ribeiro,
 6 Axelsson, Murphy *et al.*, 2013). The current results show
 7 that SES effects are manifest in the brain at an even
 8 earlier age. In addition, because findings are not depend-
 9 ent on arousal, distress, sleep deprivation or other states
 10 that affect functional measures, results reported here
 11 point more decisively to *anatomical* differences in brain
 12 development.

13 The timing of the emergence of SES effects can be
 14 informative as to their causes. Possible pre- or post-natal
 15 etiologies include the effects of maternal health, toxin
 16 exposure, nutrition, sleep quality or stress (Boyce &
 17 Kobor, 2015; Buss, Lord, Wadiwalla, Hellhammer,
 18 Lupien *et al.*, 2007; Cordero, 1990; DiPietro, 2012;
 19 Hackman *et al.*, 2010). Subjects in the present study
 20 were 5 weeks of age at time of scan, minimizing the
 21 opportunity for postnatal influence, however, such
 22 influences cannot be ruled out. Future studies utilizing
 23 MRI immediately after birth are needed to distinguish
 24 the pre- and post-natal etiologies of SES effects.

25 Furthermore, differences present at birth may result
 26 from prenatal factors, known to vary with SES, or from
 27 genetic factors, or from their interaction (DiPietro,
 28 Kivlighan, Costigan, Rubin, Shiffler *et al.*, 2010). The
 29 influence of genes on gray matter has been reported
 30 (Knickmeyer, Wang, Zhu, Geng, Woolson *et al.*, 2014);
 31 however, the relation among genes, SES influences, and
 32 neural outcome has yet to be explored. Given our results,
 33 investigations of these relations should be conducted not
 34 only for older children, but also for those at very early
 35 stages of development.

36 Different components of SES may impact brain devel-
 37 opment (Brito & Noble, 2014). The present study was not
 38 designed to parse the relative effects of income and
 39 education on brain structure. However, in larger samples
 40 of older children, individual effects of income and
 41 education have been evaluated and results have been
 42 mixed. For example, Hanson *et al.* (2011) reported an
 43 association between lower household income and lower
 44 total gray matter volume, with no influence of maternal
 45 education. Using a subset of the same cohort, Lawson
 46 *et al.* (2013) found an association between cortical thick-
 47 ness in frontal regions of interest and maternal and
 48 paternal education but not family income. Across ages
 49 3–20, family income showed stronger associations with
 50 surface area than education in a large cohort from a broad
 51 range of SES (Noble *et al.*, 2015). Studies with larger
 52 cohorts of very young infants are needed to evaluate the
 53 relative effects of SES components at young ages.

Our study, for which the long-term goal is examina-
 tion of effects of SES disparity on neural and develop-
 mental outcome, joins a growing number of
 investigations examining brain structure and outcome
 of infants and young children. The relation between
 neural status at 1 month of age and subsequent
 cognitive outcome was reported by Spann *et al.*
 (2014) in 33 infants; associations between cerebral
 surface morphology and subsequent motor, language,
 and cognitive scores were reported. Can *et al.* (2013), in
 19 infants, scanned at 7 months and evaluated at
 12 months, found relations between early gray matter
 and white matter concentration and language skills.
 Amygdala volume was found to be related to language
 outcome in infants scanned at 6 months and evaluated
 at 2 years (Ortiz-Mantilla, Choe, Flax, Grant & Bena-
 sich, 2010), with another investigation showing an
 association of white matter microstructure and infant
 working memory in infants imaged at 12 months (Short
et al., 2013). These researchers, however, did not
 examine SES effect on the relationship between neural
 development and cognitive outcome in their higher SES
 cohorts. Our data showing effects of SES on neural
 development at 1 month of age will be combined with
 later neural and cognitive evaluations to explore such
 SES effects.

Limitations of this study are several. First, our
 eligibility requirements, chosen to increase power by
 eliminating the need to control for the influential
 confounders gender (Giedd, Castellanos, Rajapakse,
 Vaituzis & Rapoport, 1997) and race/ethnicity (Bai,
 Abdul-Rahman, Rifkin-Graboi, Chong, Kwek *et al.*,
 2012), impose predictable limitations on generalizability.
 Regardless, findings inform for an understudied minor-
 ity, and provide a template for exploration of neural
 outcome at very young ages in other cohorts. Second,
 sample size may be considered a limitation; however,
 a cohort of 44 infants scanned at 1 month of age without
 sedation in a study evaluating effect of SES disparity is,
 to our knowledge, unique. While motion artifact is a
 common challenge in infant imaging studies, only two of
 the 46 successful scans were excluded due to motion, a
 relatively high success rate (Almli, Rivkin & McKinstry,
 2007; Shi *et al.*, 2011). Third, we do not have a robust
 prenatal database for this cohort that would allow for a
 careful evaluation of prenatal influences on gray and
 deep gray matter outcomes. Finally, we do not yet have
 data for evaluation of whether effects on neural out-
 comes detected at 1 month change by 12 months, or
 whether there are relationships between volumetric
 findings and infant cognitive outcomes; however, our
 ongoing longitudinal follow-up will allow for these
 analyses.

Conclusions

In this cohort of term healthy African-American females, lower SES was associated with smaller cortical gray and deep gray matter volumes at age 4–6 weeks. These differences in neural structure are early indicators of increased risk for disadvantage in cognitive and academic skills faced by poor children (Kolb, Mychasiuk & Gibb, 2014). On the other hand, it also is well established that early intervention and enriched environments can ameliorate compromised developmental outcomes (Brooks-Gunn, Klebanov, Liaw & Spiker, 1993; Campbell, Pungello, Miller-Johnson, Burchinal & Ramey, 2001). These findings underscore the need to monitor and optimize development of our youngest through programs and policies directed at reducing impact of SES disparities (Heckman & Mastrov, 2007; Knudsen, Heckman, Cameron & Shonkoff, 2006; Shonkoff, Garner, Siegel, Dobbins, Earls *et al.*, 2012). The existence of SES differences so early in life suggests that intervention cannot begin too soon in supporting families with young children (Austin, Lemon & Leer, 2005; Raikes, Green, Atwater, Kisker, Constantine *et al.*, 2006; Tamis-LeMonda, Bornstein & Baumwell, 2001). Current efforts directed toward reduction of risks posed by SES disparity are focused on the preschool years, possibly well after early foundational neural growth (Spann *et al.*, 2014); we suggest increased focus during infancy.

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Conflict of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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