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The Incidence of Postpartum Depression Among Hispanic Women

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Purpose and Significance

There is a lack of sufficient knowledge concerning the prevalence of postpartum depression (PPD) among Hispanic women. The purpose of this quantitative descriptive study was to evaluate the incidence of PPD among Hispanic women.

Method

One hundred one Hispanic women receiving healthcare services at the Mountainland's Community Health Center in Provo, UT who have given birth within the past 12 months completed the Beck Postpartum Depression Screening Scale (PDSS—Spanish Version). Women who had a cutoff score of 60 were referred for clinic mental health services available at the clinic.



Findings

Of the 101 subjects who completed the questionnaire, 53.5% (n = 54) of the women scored above 60, which is indicative of significant symptoms of postpartum depression. The mean score was 69.5, the minimum score was 35, and the maximum 175.

The individual items with the highest mean scores were:

- #3 (2.90) "I feel my emotions are up and down"
- #2 (2.60) "I feel anxious about even small things that have to do with my baby"
- #23 (2.55) "I feel alone"

The individual items with the lowest mean scores were:

- #28 (1.45) "I feel like my baby would be better off without me"
- #35 (1.48) "I feel like I want to leave this world"

Preliminary data shows that women who scored 60 or above were more likely to have less than a high school education (30.2%), to be single (43.4%), and to have a previous history of depression (27.2%).

Demographic Characteristics		
Characteristic	Mean	Range
Age	26.7	16-41
Number of pregnancies	2.5	1-8
Number of live births	2.3	1-6
Characteristic	n	%
Level of Education		
Less than high school	24	24.0
Graduated from high school	46	46.0
College (no degree)	13	13.0
4 years of college with degree	17	17.0
Nationality		
Central American	9	8.9
Mexican	74	73.3
Other	18	17.8
Marital Status		
Single	34	34.3
Married	59	59.6
Divorced	2	2.0
Separated	1	1.0
Other	3	3.0
History of Depression		
Yes	20	20.2
No	79	79.8
Treated Depression		
Yes	7	7.4
No	87	92.6
Method of Delivery		
Vaginal	75	74.3
Caesarean Section	24	23.8
Infant Feeding		
Bottle	19	18.8
Breastfeeding	35	34.7
Combination	47	46.5

Note: Because of missing data and rounding, not all n values total the sample size and not all percentages total 100

Conclusion

Hispanic women face life stressors that influence the onset and severity of PPD:

- Immigration status
- Perceived discrimination
- Linguistic barriers
- Low socioeconomic and educational status
- Healthcare barriers (such as lack of knowledge of healthcare systems, delayed access to care)

Implications for Clinical Practice

Accurate and early identification of PPD in this vulnerable population will serve to improve healthcare services for Hispanic women and their families and modify adverse psychosocial outcomes associated with PPD.

