

WHAT STRESS HAS TO DO WITH IT... CAN PSYCHOSOCIAL STRESSES LINK TO DEPRESSION?



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BACKGROUND

Depression is the # 1 complication of childbirth. Untreated depression confounds our efforts to help women achieve healthy birth outcomes. Columbus Public Health Caring for 2 (CF2) conducts screening for women prenatally and postnally using the Antepartum Questionnaire (APQ), Life Stress Events Survey and Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS).



NEED

Caring for 2 mothers have combinations of risk factors that exacerbate their depression symptoms. One out of three CF2 mothers fall into the moderate to high risk categories for depression risk according to the EPDS.

Depression Risk	
High Risk (possible referral)	23.2%
Moderate Risk (follow-up EPDS)	12.7%
Low	64.1%

OBJECTIVE

Due to the possibility of higher than usual rates of postnatal depression, we examined predictors of depression risk to inform the program's intervention, development and allocation of resources.

METHOD

- CF2 Public Health Nurses regularly screen women for:
 - Prenatal depression risk using the Antepartum Questionnaire (APQ).
 - Stress as measured by a checklist of possible adverse life events experienced.
- APQ scores were linked to EPDS scores for 179 participants (2009-2011).
 - The APQ is a psychometrically sound instrument that measures a variety of critical prenatal indicators of postnatal depression including: predisposing social factors, current depression indicators, pregnancy stress, resource availability, and social support.
- Participants' life stress events were linked to EPDS scores.
- Various correlation and regression statistical methods were used to examine relationships between APQ subscales and life event stress that we felt might have implications for service delivery.

RESULTS

- There were clear, non-trivial relationships between prenatal predictors of depression and EPDS scores as shown in the table below.
- EPDS scores below are simple correlation coefficients.

Prenatal Predictors	EPDS Score
APQ Total Score	.46
Early Relationship Experiences	.38
Depression Predisposition	.48
Pregnancy Stress	.47
Income and Education Sufficiency	.14
Social Support	.39
Life Stress Events	.22

- These correlations indicate that prenatal experiences are substantively linked to postnatal depression risk for our CF2 moms.
- In addition to the overall APQ score, early relationship experiences, depression predisposition, pregnancy stress, and social support all had moderate relationships to EPDS scores.
- R2 value of .30 indicated that we could account for about 30 percent of EPDS variance using our APQ subscale information.
- Depression predisposition measures and pregnancy stress were the most potent predictors of maternal depression.

LESSONS LEARNED

APQ is an excellent tool to examine factors that might indicate that a woman will experience postnatal depression. By assessing these stressors early, programs can identify needed interventions. Cf2 has, for example, instituted in-home clinical counseling for participants as a result.

SOURCES: CF2 Life event survey; Posner N.A, Unterman R.R, Williams K.N, et al., Screening for postpartum depression: an antepartum questionnaire. Journal of Reproductive Medicine, 1997; Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale. British Journal of Psychiatry; National Institute for Health Care Management Foundation.