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Postpartum depression in Lithuania and its association with socio-demographic and other factors

Jelena Stanislavoviene

G Norvaišaitė¹, M Orlenkovič¹, J Stanislavovienė¹, P Purlys², M Jakubauskienė¹

¹Faculty of Medicine, Vilnius University, Vilnius, Lithuania

²Artificial Intelligence Association of Lithuania, Vilnius, Lithuania

Contact: jelena.stanislavoviene@mf.vu.lt

Background: Postpartum depression remains globally prevalent and may lead to self-harm or harm to the child, especially under heightened stress. The main aim of the study was to analyze the prevalence of postpartum depression and examine its association with socio-demographic, behavioral and other factors.

Methods: the study was conducted in the 2024 autumn using an anonymous online questionnaire. Participants were recruited through social media platforms. The questionnaire was composed of several structural parts: sociodemographic data, behavioral and

other factors, Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale. A total of 1,010 women participated in the study. Spearman correlation coefficient and Fisher exact tests were used for the analysis.

Results: The target group of the study consisted of women who had given birth within the past six months. The results indicated that among the 1,010 respondents, 13.3% showed indications of postnatal depression, while 41.4% were suspected to have postnatal depression. A very high risk of postnatal depression was identified in 1.98% of respondents. A significant negative correlation was observed between depressive symptoms and material status ($r=-0.1939$, $p<0.001$). Physical activity during pregnancy/postnatal period was also significantly negatively correlated with postnatal depression ($r=-0.0914$, $p=0.004$; $r=-0.1326$, $p<0.001$). A deteriorating relationship with the partner and close individuals was associated with increased risk of depression ($r=0.343$, $p<0.001$; $r=0.2836$, $p<0.001$). Breastfeeding, close relatives' support, and planned pregnancy were all associated with lower levels of depression ($p=0.004$; $p<0.001$; $p<0.001$).

Conclusions: The results indicated that 54.7% of respondents showed signs of postnatal depression. Socio-demographic and behavioral variables like financial status, low physical activity, lack of support from relatives and deteriorating relationships were significantly associated with depressive symptom levels.

Key messages:

- In this study, 41.4% of respondents were presumed to have postpartum depression, and 13.3% had clinically relevant symptoms consistent with this disorder.
- Support from family and positive interpersonal relationships, along with adequate financial resources, physical activity may serve as protective factors in coping with postpartum depression.