

A Review of Literature Based on the Effect of Post-Partum Depression in Relations to Body Image and Mental Health of Women

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Abstract: Post-Partum Depression is a worldwide distressing issue. This review of literature aims to evaluate the relation of Post-Partum Depression concerning body image and mental health. A scientific literature review supported this issue has been undertaken from the year (2002-to 2020). The findings of this review indicate a major relationship between Post-Partum Depression, Body Image, and mental state. The review also suggests that pre-existing undiagnosed mental disorders in women act as a very important predictor for body image and mental health during her gestation period. The review also analyses the effect of prevalent psychiatric disorders, the effect of self-image and self-esteem, the effect of psychiatric medications, and therefore the effect of psychological well-being of women during gestation.

Keywords: Anti-psychiatric medication, body image, gestation, mental health literacy, post-partum depression.

1. Introduction

1) *Effect of Post-Partum Depression on Body Image and Mental Health of Women – A Review*

As per the National Health Portal of India, postpartum depression (PPD) is a mood disorder that impacts women after childbirth. PPD generally includes non-psychotic episodes of depression. The onset occurs within 1 year of within 1 to three weeks after the childbirth and is persistent over a period of months and weeks during that tenure. The word "postpartum" refers to after birth.

2) *Body Image – Definition and Impact*

Body Image could be a dynamic perceptual construct related to an individual's cognitive, behavioral, affective characteristics. A negative, obsessive and compulsive perception about a personality's body can cause body dissatisfaction leading to negative body image. Cash (2004) defined body image as the self-perception of one's physical self which ends up in thoughts and feelings resulting from that perception. Quittkat (2019) proposed uninfluenced by age, body image dissatisfaction is higher in females compared to males. The study also proposed the importance of body appearances was lower in males compared to females.

3) *Mental Health – Definition and Impact*

Mental health literacy (MHL) is often stated as awareness

and recognition about mental health disorders and the difficulties because of the plan of intervention related to it. The state of dynamic internal equilibrium and a congruous relationship between body and mind is understood as the mental state (Galderisi 2015). WHO stated mental health problems affect the functional capacity in various ways. It further states five out of 10 leading causes of world disability are mental problems including major depression, schizophrenia, bipolar disorders alcohol use, and obsessive-compulsive disorder. Furnham and Swami (2018) indicated that the past studies over the years consistently highlighted that the overall participants showed relatively poor recognition of mental health disorders and their symptoms. Findings further suggested the individuals perceived to depend on self-help over standardized medical treatment.

The purpose of this research is to encourage a psycho-educational approach to Post-Partum Depression, its etiology, and therapeutic interventions. The purpose of the study is to initiate an introspective analysis in order to enhance mental health literacy and alleviate myths and misconceptions regarding Post-Partum Depression and its symptoms.

2. Review of Literature

The review of the literature concerning the effect of Post-Partum Depression and its association with the Body Image and Mental Health in women is been undertaken through an explorative attempt. An array of research articles is taken into consideration to know the link between pregnancy, mental state, and body image.

The Royal College of Psychiatrists proposed 1 out of 5 women are affected with mental state problems during pregnancy or after birth with Anxiety and Depression is that the common cause. Howard (2014) proposed anxiety-induced to childbirth, parenting expectations, a crisis of support and depression, physiological adverse pregnancy outcomes, and brought on by stress to new roles as a parent are definite aspects that commonly cause mental state problems. Jones (2002) studied undiagnosed perinatal mental disorders indicates a high negative impact on maternal and fetal health during and post-

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birth. Females with undiagnosed disorders like anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, schizophrenia cause obstetric complications post pregnancy like preterm birth, delivery of low birth weight, and infant's small fetal age (Hoirisch, Clapauch, Brenner and Nardi 2015). Sudziute (2020) conducted a hospital-based study that suggested mothers with pre-existing mental disorders were less likely to breastfeed their newborns. Sadowski (2013) proposed women who were exposed to antipsychotics and psychotropic medications as treatment of psychiatric disorders during pregnancy experienced pre-mature birth delivery. The neonate exposed to medications showed weak neonatal adaptive signs and a high rate of congenital malformation. The subsequent research findings highlight the many relevance of mental state during pregnancy.

Watson (2015) suggested the dynamic changes of women's body size and shape during pregnancy portray a contrasting outlook that supported the prescribed general socio-cultural thin-ideal image of women. Therefore, findings further viewed pregnancy as a specific risk for body image disturbances in women. Phillips (2014) proposed psychological disorders, body dissatisfaction, and maternal body image during gestation acts as a relevant predictor of body image and weight regulation during the post-partum phase. The body image perception of women during gestation has significantly declined (Inanir Cakmak, Nacar, and Guler 2015). Findings further suggested body perception is observed to highly decline within the early stages of pregnancy compared to the pre-gestation period (Boscaglia Skouteris and Wertheim 2003). Kamysheva (2008) stated during pregnancy women may experience low levels of self-esteem therefore perceiving themselves as being obese and least attractive. The past studies establish the relevant role of body image during pregnancy.

3. Methodology

1) Objective

To investigate the association of Post-Partum Depression regarding body image and mental health of ladies.

2) Method of Selection

A literature review is broadly spoken to delineate a further or less systematic method of collection and synthesizing previous analysis (Baumeister and Leary 1997) By the means of exploration of reviewed articles a purposive study was conducted. Selection of the articles was done from the years (2002-2020) specializing in the precise domains like the effect of prevalent psychiatric disorders, the effect of self-image and self-esteem, the effect of psychiatric medications, and also the effect of psychological well-being of girls during pregnancy. Synder (2019) states literature review to be the most effective methodological tool to produce answers. Hence, a semi systematic and integrative design is employed during this review to work out the target mentioned.

4. Discussion

Irrespective of the world's attention regarding the application of medical treatment during gestation, the medical research fraternity highly lacks evidence related to safety, the

efficacy of treatments, and preventions often undertaken by pregnant women (Little and Wickremsinhe 2017). On analyzing the previous research to the recent studies, the papers reviewed during this study that were selected were based on chronological advancement and progressive nature. An overview assessment is completed concerning the studies related to Post depression, including its connection to women's body image and wellbeing.

- Women undergoing psychiatric medications affected both maternal and fetal health.
- Neonates exposed to the effect of psychiatric medications showed developmental delay and congenital malformations.
- Pregnancy acted as a signification predictor of body dissatisfaction and low self-esteem among women during the gestation
- The prevalence of untreatable psychiatric disorders in women is related to difficulties in psychological well-being and physiological birth complexities during the pre and post gestation
- Pre-existing mental disorders in mothers highlighted avoidant parent-child nursing behavior like lack of breastfeeding.
- Common co-morbidities like Anxiety and Depression are prevalent in women during gestation.

5. Conclusion

The investigation, review, and synthesis of connected literature on Post-Partum Depression are comprehensive in nature and also a conclusive analysis has been reached. Its findings indicate a robust linkage among Post-Partum Depression, Body Image, and Mental Health. This study extends its encouragement to pursue more studies that supports this issue.

6. Implications

Post-Partum Depression is currently a globally concerning issue. With limited research conducted in India supporting the difficulty, this literature review creates the scope for planning an appropriate intervention regarding post-Partum depression, its symptoms, and co-morbidities. The review permits the investigation of plausible causes leading to post-Partum depression and encourages initiatives supporting the betterment of mental state welfare additionally imparting psycho-educational initiatives to eradicate and eliminate the problematic domains.

7. Limitation

This review has scope towards a variety of themes, including implications of postpartum depression and the link between menstrual hygiene, female infanticide, marital rape, and domestic abuse. For an improved analysis of the problem, the article indicates a more comprehensive review analysis.

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