ECHO Idaho: Behavioral Health in Primary Care

Perinatal Mood Disorders:
Introduction and Risks
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Learning Objectives

• Introduction of perinatal mood and anxiety disorders
• Discussion of the effects of untreated mood and anxiety disorders in pregnancy and postpartum
• Introduce screening tools used in practice
• Discuss resources
Introduction

• The perinatal period
  • From pregnancy through the first year after giving birth
  • Highest incidence of mental health intervention across a women’s lifespan

• Prenatal Depression and Anxiety
  • 20% prevalence rate of moderate to severe depression and/or anxiety in pregnancy (O’Hara MW & Wisner KL, Best Pract Res Clin Obstet Gynaecol. 2014 Jan; 28(1):3-12.)
PMADs

• Not just PPD (postpartum depression)
• Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Disorders
  • Depression
  • Perinatal Bipolar Disorders
  • Anxiety or Panic Disorder
  • Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD)
  • Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
  • Psychosis

• #1 most common medical complication related to childbearing
  • Postpartum Depression- 21% prevalence rate  

(Wisner, KL. Et al. JAMA psychiatry. 2013.87; Earles, M. Pediatrics 2010; 126:1032-1039)
Untreated Effects

• PMADs in pregnancy
    • Poor self-care, Nutrition, Sleep
    • Increased risk of suicide
    • Negative effects on bonding
    • Noncompliance with prenatal care
    • Preterm birth, low birth weight, Pre-eclampsia, Gestational diabetes
  • Anxiety (Hosseini SM et al. *Pediatric and Perinatal Epidemiology* 2009; 23:557-566)
    • Increased cortisol levels in the fetus
    • Disruption of developing brain circuitry and hormone systems in fetus
    • Risk preterm birth, shortened gestational age, and low birth weight
Untreated Effects

• PMADs in pregnancy
    • Consequences of unprotected sex
    • Increased risk of substance use
    • Decrease self/prenatal care
    • Difficulty with realistic preparation for baby
Untreated Effects

• PMADs postpartum
  • Depression
    • Difficulty breastfeeding
    • Increase in sleep disturbance in mothers
    • Poor self-care and infant care
    • Difficulty with bonding/attachment
    • Decrease in adherence to follow-up appointments for baby

  • decreased levels of dopamine and serotonin in newborn
  • Increased crying, harder to soothe
  • Delayed fetal heart rate responsivity
  • Brain activity mimics that of depressed adults
Untreated Effects

• PMADs postpartum
  • Anxiety
    • Increase in sleep disturbance in mothers
    • Increased risk of developing OCD
  • Risks for baby (Earls M, Committee on Psychosocial Aspects of Child and Family Health. Pediatrics. 201;126(5):1032-39)
    • Increased fight or flight activation in babies- increased startle response
    • Increased difficulty learning new tasks
    • Increased anxiety and fear in infants/children
    • Babies harder to soothe
    • Persistent elevation of cortisol could disrupt developing brain
      • Affects hippocampus, amygdala, and prefrontal cortex
      • Ultimately can impact learning, memory, emotional and behavioral adaptation (Bright Futures: Guidelines for Health Supervision of Infants, Children, and Adolescents. Elk Grove Village, IL: American Academy of Pediatrics 2008)
Screening

• Prevalence of perinatal complications
  • Gestational Hypertension- 6-8%
  • Pre-eclampsia- 6-8%
  • Gestational Diabetes- 6%
  • PMADs- 21% Wisner, KL. Et al. JAMA psychiatry. 2013.87

• Who can screen?
  • ALL providers who interface with pregnant or postpartum women (OB/GYN, Primary Care/Internal Medicine docs, Pediatricians, hospitals, Childbirth educators, lactation consultants, NPs, PAs, CNMs, counselors/therapists, OTs, etc.)
Screening

- Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS)
  - Can be used in pregnancy and postpartum
  - Ten item self-report assessment
  - Free to download and use
  - Meant for screening purposes, not diagnostic
    - Score higher than 10 warrants more investigation/referral
Key Points

• The perinatal period includes all of pregnancy through the first year after the birth of the baby

• Untreated effects/risks of perinatal mood and anxiety disorders often outweigh effects/risks of treatment

• Thorough screening is key
Resources

• Postpartum Support International
  • Toll-free helpline for women and families 1-800-944-4773 (ext. 1 for English, ext. 2 for Spanish)
  • Perinatal Psychiatric Consult Line 1-800-944-4773 (Ext. 4) *Medical providers only
  • www.postpartum.net