

Post-natal depression and the online world

Do mothers benefit from on-line post-natal depression support?

For those who choose to get pregnant it can be a happy, exciting time. This is not the case for everyone. In New Zealand, 10% to 15% of mothers end up developing post-natal depression after giving birth of their children (Wilson, 2015). Mothers who are affected by PND can feel embarrassed and ashamed about their feelings. These feelings keep them from reporting their symptoms (Maloni, Przeworski, Damato, (2013). Some mothers feel that their PND feelings are a personality deficit and this contributed to them being less likely to ask for support (Curtis, Robertson, Forst, Bradford, 2007). Healthcare providers miss half of PND cases, causing it to go under-diagnosed and under-treated. Because of this it is important to support mothers through this time and in as many ways as possible (Drake, Howard, Kinsey, 2014)



Picture from getdrawings.com

Literature Review

There are barriers to getting support and treatment for PND. Some of the barriers are the stigma associated with mental health, practical barriers and also cultural barriers. Evidence shows that the online world is capable of breaking through some these barriers. Salonen, Pridham, Brown, Kaunonen, (2014) share that social support from peers and professionals can help women to adjust to motherhood and decrease the risk of PND. Online social groups (OSGs), social networking sites and other forms of social media are changing communication and the way people are linking to each other. There is low or no cost with access to internet and because of smart phones, tablets and other portable devices it is convenient for women to use at any time. With this access comes the ability to be anonymous which helps the women to open up and able to be very honest with themselves and other group members (Maloni et al, 2013).

Recommendation

Nurses are on the front line of health care in New Zealand. An awareness of the resources and treatments of PND available for mothers is crucial to helping them. The more comprehensive the process is the better the outcomes for women and their families. Pairing tradition treatment (like medication, face to face counselling, regular screening and support groups) with online computer programmes and support groups will help women to get the help and support they need (Teaford, Goyal, McNeish, 2015). By setting up or connecting people on social media, nurses can support mothers with PND. Online tools can include education about PND, strategies to cope, exercises to practice strategies, as well as a connection to other people going through the same struggles. They can provide a stigma free space through anonymity and can enable women to choose the help they want. (Ayers et al, 2015, Maloni et al 2013).

Conclusion

Post-natal depression has an impact not only on the woman involved but also her family and people around her. It is critical to support these families. Having an online community can break down barriers and connect people to knowledge and gain the help they want and need. Working together with families, nurses can help support families to grow, achieve and be as healthy as possible.

Reference:

- Black, C. (2014) Mother's Mental health vital for baby. *Kai Tiaki Nursing New Zealand*, 20, 24-25
- Curtis, R., Robertson, P., Forst, A., & Bradford, C. (2007). Postpartum mood disorders: results of an online survey. *Counselling & Psychotherapy Research*, 7(4), 203-210.
- Drake, E., Howard, E., & Kinsey, E. (2014). Online Screening and Referral for Postpartum Depression: An Exploratory Study. *Community Mental Health Journal*, 50(3), 305-311. doi:10.1007/s10597-012-9573-3
- Maloni, J., Przeworski, A., & Damato, E. (2013). Web Recruitment and Internet Use and Preferences Reported by Women with Postpartum Depression After Pregnancy Complications. *Archives of Psychiatric Nursing*, 27(2), 90-95. doi:10.1016/j.apnu.2012.12.001
- Salonen, A., Pridham, K., Brown, R., & Kaunonen, M. (2014). Impact of an internet-based intervention on Finnish mothers' perceptions of parenting satisfaction, infant centrality and depressive symptoms during the postpartum year. *Midwifery*, 30(1), 112-122. doi:10.1016/j.midw.2013.02.009
- Teaford, D., Goyal, D., & McNeish, S. (2015). Identification of Postpartum Depression in an Online Community. *JOGNN: Journal Of Obstetric, Gynecologic & Neonatal Nursing*, 44(5), 578-586. doi:10.1111/1552-6909.12740
- Wilson, D. (2015) Mothers Matter. How many to go where tonight. Retrieved from <https://www.mothermatters.co.nz/>

Bridget Murray

Seeing someone suffer with Post-natal depression is difficult to watch. The mental state of a person can have a huge impact on their daily lives. In order to be helpful, a nurse or health care professional needs as much information as possible. Having information is important so nurses have different strategies to help Mothers suffering. The information I have gathered and found in the literature review is interesting and I want to get it across in the clearest way possible. This is why I have chosen an academic poster. An "academic poster can be a great way of presenting research in a concise and powerful manner" (Webster, 2016). Having a poster that is clear and easy to read will "give a visual representation of an issue in a way that first attracts attention and then conveys an intended message" (Rowe, Ilic, 2009). With an attractive poster it draws in nurses and helps them to retain the information and help mothers on the journey back to health.

PECOT framework

Population: Mothers with post-natal depression

Explanation: Being pregnant and being Mother is a huge change in people's lives. It is regarded to be a happy time but not for everyone, mothers with PND need help so they can become healthy again

Exposure: Mothers who use online communities and social media.

Explanation: Will having a connection to a community in the online world be helpful or make Mothers feel worse?

Comparison/Control: Mothers who use traditional sources of post-natal depression support.

Explanation: Not every person is interested in the help available like medications and support groups. Will online open the door for more people getting help or will it cause people to feel worse?

Outcome: Availability of support networks to suit all mothers both online or face to face

Explanation: Being a mother is hard, they are sleep deprived and trying to learn to feed their child and get to know this new infant. Getting help may be hard enough, then there may be barriers to getting there

Time: Within a year of giving birth

Explanation: PND is more likely to happen to a Mother in the first year after the birth of their child.

Reference:

Rowe, N., & Ilic, D. (2009). Innovating professional knowledge transfer: from academic poster to 'MediaPoster'. *Medical Education*, 43(5), 496. doi:10.1111/j.1365-2923.2009.03338.x

Webster, R. (2016) Academic Posters, The University of Manchester retrieved from <http://www.supi.manchester.ac.uk/forteachers/academicposterguidance/>