

Fact Sheet

Maternal Depression

- Occurs during pregnancy and up to 12 months following delivery.
- Is a major public health problem affecting 10–15 percent of all women, and up to 28 percent of women living in poverty.
- Is the single most common complication of pregnancy, and may be associated with spontaneous preterm birth. It affects how a woman is able to relate to others, including her new baby, and has long-term effects on infants and young children.

Screening and Treatment

- Depressive episodes tend to be recurrent with successive pregnancies and depressive symptoms often go undetected.
- Screening instruments are extremely effective in detecting depression and, when performed on every patient, detect over 95 percent of cases.
- Studies have found that clinicians play a critical role in helping women who suffer with depressive symptoms, but many of them lack the knowledge to effectively screen and treat or refer women with this disorder.
- Although depression is treatable and may not resolve without treatment, approximately 50 percent of women with postpartum depression are untreated
- Untreated depression is the single leading cause of suicide.

Screening Tools

Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS)

Available at <http://health.utah.gov/rhp/pdf/EPDS.pdf>

Center for Epidemiological Studies- Depression (CES-D) Scale.

Available at <http://www.chcr.brown.edu/pcoc/cesdscale.pdf>.