

https://dspace.org/

The occurrence of postpartum post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) Amongst Women in Johannesburg Metropolitan Clinics

Pheto, Botho Pilediwa

2021
https://hdl.handle.net/10539/33718

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

Abstract

Background: A large body of research suggests a significant link between childbirth and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Existing evidence demonstrates that some women perceive childbirth as a traumatic experience that can trigger the development of PTSD in the postpartum period. A prevalence rate of 4, 9% has been reported by recent studies. Postpartum PTSD has not been studied in the South African setting.

Objective: Investigate the occurrence of PTSD among women in Johannesburg metropolitan clinics who are six weeks postpartum and examine associated factors.

Method: A cross sectional study was conducted among 88 postpartum women attending routine six week baby immunization clinics in the Johannesburg Metropolitan district. A self-report questionnaire was administered to collect data on participant socio-demographic characteristics, support received during labour and from partners, delivery mode and neonatal outcome along with the City Birth Trauma Scale to screen for PTSD symptoms in relation to the most recent childbirth experience.

Results: Close to half of the participants (48.9%) perceived their most recent childbirth as a traumatic event, believing either themselves or their baby would be seriously injured or die. One participant (1.1%) endorsed all symptoms required to diagnose PTSD. Women who reported childbirth as a traumatic event had higher PTSD scores than women who did not report childbirth as a traumatic event. Significantly more participants that reported childbirth as a traumatic event also reported experiencing intrusion/re-experiencing symptoms (Fisher's test = 0.003, CI = 1.42 – 9.99). Significantly more participants that endorsed childbirth as a traumatic event also reported having avoidance symptoms (Fisher's test = 0.020, CI = 1.15 – 10.17).

Conclusion: The percentage of participants who perceived birth as a traumatic experience was in keeping with international literature. However the percentage of participants who met full diagnostic criteria for PTSD at six seeks postpartum was lower than expected compared to international research. There is need for longer term follow up of women who report childbirth as a traumatic experience as well as develop validated screening tools targeted at PTSD in postpartum women.

Keywords: postpartum, posttraumatic stress disorder**,** childbirth