



Prevalence of Postpartum Depression and Self-harming Ideation among Postnatal Mothers in Selected MOH Areas in the Western Province, Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Postpartum depression (PPD) is a form of depression that occurs in a postnatal mother following childbirth. Statistics in 2018 estimated that 17.7% of mothers experience PPD globally with a prevalence ranging from 7-33% in Asian countries. In South Asia, the reported prevalence ranges from 5-49%. A few studies have assessed its prevalence, and no research has been conducted in MOH areas of the Western Province. Additionally, there is limited focus on assessing self-harming ideation in mothers following delivery in Sri Lanka. This study aimed to determine the prevalence of PPD and self-harming ideation among postnatal mothers in selected MOH areas in the Western Province of Sri Lanka. Mothers with PPD between 1 to 6 months postpartum were identified using a validated screening tool, the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EDPS) with a cut-off mark of 9 or more through an interviewer-administered questionnaire. Self-harming ideation was assessed through the 10th question in the EDPS 'The thoughts of harming myself has occurred to me'. A total of 422 mothers, selected using simple random sampling from 10 MOH areas across all three districts in the Western Province, participated in the study, with a 100% response rate. PPD was evident in 97 mothers out of 422 scoring 9 or more on EDPS highlighting a prevalence of 22.99%. Additionally, 35 mothers (8.29%) out of 422 were identified as having self-harming thoughts. Among these, 18 (51.42%) of mothers experienced such thoughts 'hardly ever', 15

(42.85%) 'sometimes', and 2 (5.71%) 'quite often'. Approximately, one in five mothers experience PPD and one in thirteen mothers experience self-harming ideation. This emphasizes the significance of addressing postnatal maternal health focusing on prenatal and postnatal care.

Keywords: Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale; Postpartum Depression; Postnatal Mothers; Prevalence; Self-harming thoughts