E2.2: Perinatal Loss and Subsequent Birth

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Abstract:
Introduction: Evaluate the influence of previous perinatal loss on parents’ emotional distress during and after the birth of a subsequent healthy infant, and to compare this stress to that experienced by parents without a history. Expectant parents frequently experience apprehension about the outcome of a subsequent pregnancy that may lead to depression and anxiety. It is unclear whether increased psychological distress during subsequent pregnancies continues after birth.

Method(s): A three-group, repeated measures design was used to collect data from parents in the third trimester (T1), three months postpartum (T2), and again eight months after birth (T3). The sample consisted of 36 couples with a history of perinatal loss, 38 couples in their first pregnancy, and 32 couples who have experienced a previous pregnancy and no loss. Measures included Center for Epidemiologic Studies-Depression Scale, Spielberger State-Trait Anxiety Inventory, and Maternal/Paternal Attitudes Questionnaire.
Results: CES-D scores did not differ between the three groups (p=0.2322) or by gender (p=0.1316), while CES-D scores did differ based on time (p<0.001). A gender by time interaction effect existed (p=0.0120) for CES-D scores. STAI state scores did not differ between the groups (p=0.2159) or by gender (p=0.2182), although STAI state scores did differ based on time (p<0.001). At T3 there were significant group differences on all the MAQ subscales. Parents with a prior history of loss reported higher levels of investment in their infant than those with previous pregnancies and no losses, but not first-time parents (F 2 = 4.70, p = .010). In addition, parents with a history of perinatal loss had significantly greater concerns about their infant’s health at T3 than either of the other comparison groups (F2 = 8.53, p < .001).

Discussion & Conclusions: Knowledge of the trajectory of parents’ psychological distress from the third trimester of a subsequent healthy pregnancy through the first six months postpartum enables identification of parents at risk for continuing psychological distress and for the development of interventions to prevent or decrease adverse family outcomes.

Abstract History:
This abstract has not been presented or accepted for presentation in whole or in part at the SNRS or other scientific meeting.

Financial Disclosure:
No, I (or a member of my immediate family) have not received something of value* from or own stock (or stock options) in a commercial company or institution related directly or indirectly to the subject of my presentation.

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I will not be describing any pharmaceutical and/or medical device.

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