P1-18: Postpartum Depression in Previously Infertile Mothers: The State of the Science

Author List:
Presenting Author: Sigrid L. Ladores
Additional Author:

Presenting Author: Sigrid L Ladores
Address: 2776 Hazel Grove Lane
Oviedo, Florida 32766
United States
Ph: 407-754-4648
Fax:
Email: sladores@mail.ucf.edu
Institution: University of Central Florida

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Abstract:
Introduction: Postpartum depression (PPD) is a growing public health concern that affects 10-20\% of women across the globe. Many women with PPD struggle to recognize their symptoms. This is especially true for previously infertile mothers who repress their desire for help due to guilt that the only emotion expected of them is happiness over the much-anticipated outcome of a baby. Infertile women are at risk for developing depression during fertility treatment and even during pregnancy when treatment is successful. PPD has been well-studied quantitatively, however, there is inequality in the number of qualitative studies found. Qualitative approaches extract how these women make sense of their world. The aim of this paper is to describe the experience of PPD by previously infertile mothers. The state of the science is presented using qualitative studies as sources.

Method(s): The search strategy used databases Medline, CINAHL, PsycINFO, and PsycARTICLES as well as keywords such as postpartum depression, infertility, reproductive technology, and qualitative research. Inclusion criteria included peer-reviewed, primary research articles written in English and published after 1999. Classic and seminal works were included. Exclusion criteria included review articles, secondary analyses, and presence of other mood disorders with PPD. A total of 17 articles for PPD and 7 articles for infertility were used as sources.

Results: The qualitative data available on PPD and infertility were diverse in their cultural contexts, sample sizes, ages, qualitative methods used, and overall findings. Six similar result categories were extracted. In synthesizing the results of both literature, it is clear that previously infertile mothers endure cumulative attacks to their physical and psychosocial beings. These
women are often misunderstood and mistreated. The importance of formal and informal support networks is underscored to help reconcile the gaps between the myths and realities of motherhood, and lead these women unto a path of recovery.

**Discussion & Conclusions:** It is evident that more qualitative research needs to be completed on this vulnerable population. The current state of the science is in its infancy. Herein lies an opportunity for researchers to establish a program of research that addresses the needs of this marginalized group of women.

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

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**Submitted by:**
sladores@mail.ucf.edu