PII-45: Social Support and Maternal Competence of Taiwanese Postpartum Mothers with or without Fatigue

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Abstract:
Introduction: Fatigue is a common problem experienced by postpartum mothers and it may influence mothers’ performance of maternal role. It may also be influenced by social support.
The purposes of this analysis were to examine (a) differences on social support and maternal competence of postpartum mothers who perceived or not perceived fatigue and (b) effects of fatigue and support on maternal competence.

**Method(s):** The study was a cross-sectional design with snowball sampling. Data from 238 mothers within 1 year postpartum were analyzed. Instruments included the Postpartum Support Questionnaire, Parenting Sense of Competence, and a single question about perception of fatigue. Descriptive statistics, t-test, regression, and Sobel test were used. Participants’ mean age was 30.81 years while 50.8% of participants were primiparous, 97.5% received traditional cultural care, 98.7% were married, 62.9% had an education equal or lower than associate degree, 78.9% worked full time, and 68.1% had a vaginal birth. Infants’ mean age was 6.26 months and 50.4% were males.

**Results:** Participants were not highly confident in their maternal role performance. They received significantly less support than they needed. Mothers who felt fatigue (35.3%) received less support ($t=2.82, p=.01$) and had lower confidence in maternal role performance ($t=2.51, p=.01$) than mothers without fatigue. Fatigue and support received explained 2.6% and 4.5% of the variance of maternal competence, respectively. Support received mediated the effects of fatigue on maternal competence ($Sobel=-2.04, p=.04$).

**Discussion & Conclusions:** Many postpartum mothers experienced fatigue and did not receive sufficient support. Strategies that can decrease fatigue may improve maternal competence, especially supportive interventions involved maternal social networks. Studies can expand to mothers of various ethnicities and test interventions to improve maternal competence.

**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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