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AUSTRALIA

# Paternal Postnatal Depression in First-Time Fathers

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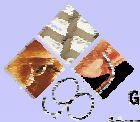
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DISCIPLINE OF  
GENERAL PRACTICE  
Advancing Primary Health Care

# WHAT IS POSTNATAL DEPRESSION?

- Postnatal depression (PND) is defined as “the negative mood and loss of motivation experienced by [10%- 15%] mothers after childbirth” (Winson & McDonald, 2005; Tammentie et al, 2004)
- Current research indicates that psychosocial factors, worry, isolation, responsibility, a past history of depression, marital disharmony and physical health problems such as anaemia, are the most relevant indicators (Cooper & Murray, 1998 p. 1884; Tammentie et al, 2002).
- PND has a negative impact on the health of the mother and her family including the disturbances in a child’s social, behavioural, cognitive and physical development (Goodman 2004, Cooper & Murray, 1998, Ramchandani et al, 2005)

# WHAT IS PATERNAL POSTNATAL DEPRESSION?

- Research indicates that postnatal depression in fathers is a clinically significant phenomenon during the first postnatal year (Pinhiero et al, 2006; Matthey et al, 2003; Deater-Deckard et al, 1998)
- Postnatal fathers experience a variety of symptoms including depressed mood, anxiety, stress, neuroticism and psychological distress (Pinhiero et al, 2006; Matthey et al, 2003; Quinlivan & Condon, 2005; Condon et al, 2004; Areias et al, 1996a, 1996b; Skari et al, 2002; Deater-Deckard et al, 1998)
- Approximately 5%-10% of fathers will experience postnatal depression

# OUTCOMES OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW

- Primary studies have been conducted in Australia and internationally
- More of the existing research in this area uses quantitative methods to measure the prevalence of PPND in fathers
- A lack of qualitative research that explores the experiences of first-time fathers with postnatal depression



## OUTCOMES OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW (cont'd)

- The transition to fatherhood appears to have a profound effect on many first-time fathers
- Current literature indicates men experience anxiety and depression specifically related to their role as a new father
- A perceived lack of gender specific education by health professionals
- A lack of support directly related to the role of a new father in the early postnatal period
- PND in the mother was the strongest predictor of depression in the father
- Men are at greater risk of their depression going unrecognised and untreated

# OUTCOMES OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW (cont'd)

Major focus of research involving postnatal fathers:

- To investigate the correlates of postnatal depression in mothers and fathers
- To compare levels of psychological distress, stress and depression in postnatal couples
- To assess paternal and maternal depressed mood during the transition to parenthood
- To determine the prevalence of paternal depression

## OUTCOMES OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW (cont'd)

No gender specific screening instrument available that may be used by primary health professionals

Commonly used screening instruments for depression:

- Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS)
- Beck Depression Inventory (BDI)
- General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-28)

The EPDS was the first screening instrument to be used to detect depression in new fathers (Cox et al, 1990; Matthey et al; 2001)

## RESEARCH TOPIC

# EXPLORING THE EXPERIENCES OF FIRST TIME FATHERS WITH PATERNAL POSTNATAL DEPRESSION DURING THE FIRST SIX MONTHS OF FATHERHOOD: A GROUNDED THEORY ANALYSIS



## QUESTIONS THIS STUDY HOPES TO ANSWER

- What are the lived experiences of first-time fathers with postnatal depression in relation to parenting and their role as a father in the first few months of the postnatal period?
- If first-time fathers experience depression following the birth of their newborn, do their symptoms improve or worsen over the first six months of the postnatal period?
- How does paternal postnatal depression impact on a first-time father's perception of the bonding experience with his newborn?

## QUESTIONS THIS STUDY HOPES TO ANSWER

- What do men understand about their experiences of parenting, fatherhood and living with postnatal depression?
- Is there a perceived gap in gender specific parenting education during the antenatal and postnatal (before birth and after birth) period that may contribute to first-time fathers developing paternal postnatal depression?
- How does PPND affect the mental health and well being of the father and his family?

# RESEARCH DESIGN

- A sequential mixed methods exploratory design using qualitative and quantitative methods to obtain data (Creswell, 2007)
- The qualitative component includes individual interviews with participants at 2 months, 4 months and 6 months of the postnatal period in an effort to explore the experiences that first-time fathers with depression during the first 6 months of fatherhood
- Discussions will be audio taped and later transcribed verbatim providing a descriptive narrative for analysis
- Grounded theory will be used to determine themes within the data

# RESEARCH DESIGN (cont'd)

- The data will be used to help inform the quantitative phase of the study leading to the development of a gender specific instrument to measure the symptoms of postnatal depression in men
- Pilot test the instrument using a randomly selected group of participants
- Results of the Pilot test together with feedback from participants will be used to rectify and amend the instrument to ensure sound psychometric properties  
(The elements that contribute to the statistical adequacy of the instrument in terms of reliability, validity, and internal consistency) (Creswell, 2005)

## WHY USE GROUNDED THEORY ANALYSIS?

- A qualitative research method will explore the phenomenon of paternal postnatal depression in-depth and identify important variables
- Grounded theory will generate rich, dense data about the lived experiences of fathers with postnatal depression because the participants are an integral part of the research (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).
- Uses a systematic set of procedures to develop an inductively derived grounded theory about a phenomenon
- Data collection, data coding and data interpretation

## WHAT THIS RESEARCH WILL CONTRIBUTE

- The results of this study will add to the body of knowledge about paternal postnatal depression
- Highlight the significance of PPND as a mental health issue in fathers
- A gender specific screening instrument for postnatal depression in men
- Information may assist pathways to best-practice care



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# QUESTIONS?



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