

## Sigma's 30th International Nursing Research Congress

### Perinatal Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder: A Literature Review

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**Background:** Maternal stress, anxiety, and depression are all correlated to the development of disruptive behavioral disorders. Because of the importance of the maternal-infant attachment to children's development, factors that interfere with attachment are worthy of exploration. This knowledge can inform nursing interventions in caring for expectant and new parents.

The association between postpartum depression and maternal-infant attachment is well-established. However, the perinatal period is a time of increased vulnerability to other mental health conditions as well. Prevalence rates of perinatal Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) have been reported to vary from 0-21% in community samples and 0-43% in high-risk women. Research examining the experience of perinatal onset PTSD is sparse. To provide more comprehensive care, more information on women's experience of and risk factors for perinatal PTSD is needed. Further exploration of women's experiences of PTSD can inform clinical practice in caring for women experiencing this phenomenon.

**Purpose:** In light of varied prevalence rates, poor understanding of risk factors, and limited understanding of attitudes and experiences of women who experience perinatal onset PTSD, the purpose of this study was to conduct a systematic literature review to understand women's experiences of PTSD in the perinatal period.

**Methods:** This review was conducted using four health-related databases: Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL), MEDLINE, PsycINFO, and Embase. Search terms were aimed at exploring women's experiences of perinatal onset of PTSD. Authors identified peer reviewed journal articles from a variety of disciplines that were published between 2008 and 2018. A critical appraisal was performed.

**Results:** A taxonomy of maternal PTSD experiences was developed to further understand this potentially devastating phenomenon.

**Conclusion:** Published studies on perinatal onset PTSD have design weaknesses and poor understanding of women's' experiences of PTSD during the perinatal period. Additional research is needed to examine and develop effective interventions to address PTSD during the perinatal period.

The concept of perinatal PTSD and the impact it can have on maternal-child attachment is highly important to nursing research and practice. As mentioned previously, nursing is uniquely positioned to apply population-based interventions to have the greatest impact on population health. Findings from this study will be relevant to new and soon to be parents, maternity care providers from acute to community-based care, and community stakeholders and agencies. As such, the research findings can influence clinical practice to improve population health in regards to promoting healthy pregnancies, healthy development, and healthy childhood.

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**Title:**

Perinatal Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder: A Literature Review

**Keywords:**

Maternal mental-health, PTSD and Perinatal

**References:**

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**Abstract Summary:**

More information on women's experiences of perinatal-PTSD (P-PTSD) is needed. The purpose of this systematic review was to understand women's experiences of P-PTSD. A taxonomy of P-PTSD experiences was developed to understand this phenomenon. Additional research is needed to examine and develop effective interventions to address P-PTSD.

**Content Outline:**

1. Introduction: The perinatal period is a time of increased vulnerability to other mental health
  1. Maternal mental health concerns can have implications on maternal-infant attachment and thus infant development.

2. Prevalence rates of perinatal Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) have been reported to vary from 0-21% in community samples and 0-43% in high-risk women. Research examining the experience of perinatal onset PTSD is sparse.
2. Main Point 1: To provide more comprehensive care, more information on women's experience of and risk factors for perinatal PTSD is needed.
  1. Further exploration of women's experiences of PTSD can inform clinical practice in caring for women experiencing this phenomenon.
  2. The purpose of this study was to conduct a systematic literature review to understand women's experiences of PTSD in the perinatal period.
- Main Point 2: An online search of CINAHL, Medline, Psychinfo, and Embase databases was conducted.
  1. Search terms were aimed at exploring women's experiences of perinatal onset of PTSD.
  2. A taxonomy of maternal PTSD experiences was developed to further understand this potentially devastating phenomenon.
1. Main Point 3: Published studies on perinatal onset PTSD have design weaknesses and poor understanding of women's' experiences of PTSD during the perinatal period. Additional research is needed to examine and develop effective interventions to address PTSD during the perinatal period.
  1. The concept of perinatal PTSD and the impact it can have on maternal-child attachment is highly important to nursing research and practice.
  2. Nursing is uniquely positioned to apply population-based interventions to have the greatest impact on population health.
  3. Findings from this study will be relevant to new and soon to be parents, maternity care providers from acute to community-based care, and community stakeholders and agencies.
  4. As such, the research findings can influence clinical practice to improve population health in regards to promoting healthy pregnancies, healthy development, and healthy childhood.

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**Author Summary:** Ms. Bright is a doctoral candidate in the Faculty of Nursing at the University of Calgary. Her research focuses on the use of online interpersonal psychotherapy for women during the perinatal period. She is a Registered Nurse at an outpatient women's reproductive psychiatric clinic. Her master's work was exploring the transition into motherhood for women who had very low birth weight babies. She completed a Bachelor of Nursing and Science at the University of Calgary.