Women’s Experience of Post-partum Post-traumatic Stress Disorder: A systematic review

Julia Imanoff, RN, MN, PNC(C), Doctoral Student & Katherine Bright, RN, MN, Doctoral Candidate.
Faculty of Nursing, University of Calgary

Objective
In light of varied prevalence rates, poor understanding of risk factors, and limited understanding of attitudes and experiences of women who experience PP-PTSD, the purpose of this study was to conduct a systematic literature review to understand women’s experiences of PTSD in the post-partum period.

Background
• The maternal-infant dyad provides a child with a secure base for social exploration and a source of comfort when distressed.
• The perinatal period is a time of increased vulnerability to mental health conditions that pose risks to child development when that foundational relationship is compromised.
• Prevalence rates of postpartum Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PP-PTSD) have been reported to vary from 0-21% in community samples and 0-43% in high-risk women.
• Research examining the experience of postpartum onset PTSD is sparse. To provide more comprehensive care, more information on women’s experience of and risk factors for PP-PTDS is needed.

Study Design
Systematic review:
• Protocol registered in PROSPERO
• CINAHL, Medline, PsychInfo, Embase, CCRT, Family & Society, Academic Search Premier, and Scopus databases
• Search terms included: Postpartum, Post-traumatic Stress Disorder, Birth-trauma, Delivery,
Subjects:
• Women over 18 years old
• Postpartum women (birth – 12 months postpartum)

Results
• Results identified through database search: n=5706
• Records after duplicates removed: n=2348
• Level 1 title and abstract screening with 2 reviewers:
  • Test sample of 600 articles resulted in n =83 articles that met inclusion criteria and n=16 that need to be screened in full to determine eligibility
  • The initial 600 articles were screened with a 96.2% agreement between the two reviewers.

Expected Outcomes
• Depending on the type of traumatic event, there may be different ways in which Health Care Providers initiate and select treatment options.
• We suspect that there will be different types of PP-PTSD.
• These different types of PP-PTSD will require different approaches to assist in mentally stabilizing women.
• The intent of this project is to improve patient outcomes through improving clinical decision-making in the care and treatment of women who experience PP-PTSD.

References