Mom-to-Mom: A Program to Mentor and Support Pregnant Women Whose Spouses are Deployed to the Combat Zone

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Maternal Psychosocial Adaptation

- “A woman’s ability to adapt and identify with the concept of being a mother across many dimensions”
  Regina P. Lederman, PhD, FAAN
• Gravidas having deployed military husbands have greater conflict with psychosocial adaptation to pregnancy than those without deployed husbands

• Conflict continued after the partner’s return
• Negative effects on gestational age & birth weight
• Support network reduced conflict
Supportive Relationships in Pregnancy

Relationship with partner
Relationship with own mother
General community social support

“Nurturing and support a woman receives from her husband and family is tangible support and important to her self-esteem”. Rubin, 1984
Marital relationship reported as most significant dimension affecting course of pregnancy

Relationship with gravida’s own mother or mother figure key to maternal identity

Community support predictive of birth weight

Support
The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of a support program for pregnant military wives in promoting adaptation to pregnancy and maternal-fetal attachment.
• Study Design
  o Randomized interventional study
  o Control: Standard prenatal care
  o Intervention: 8-session semistructured classes mirroring Lederman’s dimensions
  o Facilitator/Mentors

Sample
65 women (521)
Married
1st trimester
Spousal deployment
[11% attrition (n=8) due to miscarriage, move, work requirements]
The Intervention

• 1st – 3rd trimester
• 90 minutes
• Participant manual
  o Information about pregnancy
  o Reflective exercises
  o Fill-in-the blank questions
• Facilitated discussion
  o Lederman’s dimensions
## Variables & Measures

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<th>Self-Esteem</th>
<th>Support</th>
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<td>Lederman PSEQ</td>
<td>Maternal Antenatal Attachment Scale</td>
<td>Rosenberg SE</td>
<td>Social Support Index</td>
<td>Program Satisfaction Questionnaire</td>
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Results

• No differences between control and intervention group on outcome variables
• Significant difference found for the amount of contact and relationship with husband variable
• Significant difference found for the amount of contact and self-esteem
• High satisfaction with program support, manual, and content
Discussion

• For both groups the highest amount of contact was associated with higher scores for relationship with partner and self-esteem

• Control group had more contact with partner

• Questionable strength of intervention (every other week, off-topic discussion, lack of refocusing)

• Data on parity not collected
Conclusion

• Successful adaption to motherhood first step to strong family relationship that can support the changing roles and responsibilities of a military family
• Importance of remote support via phone/email contact during deployment
• Support groups led by facilitators with military and obstetrical experience preferred
Questions or Comments?