

The Press

Kanagawa University of Human Services

Drastically increased postpartum depression during the COVID-19 pandemic and its association with social restrictions.

About School of Health Innovation

School of Health Innovation (hereinafter SHI) are based on the ME-BYO concept for fostering persons in areas of innovation in social systems and pursuing cutting-edge technologies. Besides, we conduct research activities to try to materialize a healthy aging society.

Abstract

The prevalence of postpartum depression during the pandemic (28.7%) was much higher than before (14.4%). In addition, COVID-19-related social restrictions and loss of social support from healthcare professionals, families, and friends were significantly associated with postpartum depression.

The research backgrounds and approaches

Under the COVID-19 crisis, the surrounding environments of perinatal women have drastically changed, and it cannot help facing various restrictions, loss of social support, and loss of maternal autonomy.

A team of researchers, led by Dr. Kanami TSUNO, Associate Professor at the School of Health Innovation, conducted an Internet survey targeting 600 postpartum women on October 2020. Their findings were published as an Original Article in *the Journal of Affective Disorders*.

The authors used the Edinburgh Postpartum Depression Scale to measure postpartum depression. The prevalence ratios were estimated by the log-binominal regression model, adjusting for the potential confounders, including age, education, household income, residential area, parity, the timing of delivery, and a prior history of depression.

The research conclusions

The study found that approximately 30% of women who delivered and raised babies during the COVID-19 pandemic had postpartum depression, which was much higher than before. In addition, more than 90% of women experienced restriction of their family members' visits during their hospital stay.

Social restrictions, including cancellation of home visits by healthcare professionals and cancellation of infant checkups or vaccinations, loss of support during pregnancy or after delivery, including loss of opportunities to consult with healthcare professionals or friends and cancellation of parents or other family members' visits to

support, and loss of autonomy about delivery or breastfeeding, were associated with postnatal depression.

The results indicate that both formal and informal support should not be limited to preventing postpartum depression during a pandemic.

Original Article:

Tsuno K, Okawa S, Matsushima M, et al. The effect of social restrictions, loss of social support, and loss of maternal autonomy on postpartum depression in 1 to 12-months postpartum women during the COVID-19 pandemic. *J Affect Disord.* 2022;307:206-214. doi: 10.1016/j.jad.2022.03.056.

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0165032722003032?via%3Dihub>

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