



PalStudent Journal
A Palestinian Scientific Journal for the Youth



ABSTRACTS: VOLUME 7, SPECIAL ISSUE {7th Undergraduate Conference}

ABSTRACT

Postpartum Depression in Palestine

Duha Bani Odeh, Batool, Rama, Mays, Christina.

Supervisor: Dr. Amanda Khalaf.

Arab American University

Background: Postpartum depression (PPD) is a significant public health concern worldwide, with serious implications for maternal mental health, infant development, and family dynamics. Mothers in underserved communities, particularly in low- and middle-income countries, face additional challenges that may increase their vulnerability to postpartum depression, including limited access to healthcare, insufficient social support, and economic hardship. Despite its recognized impact, PPD remains underdiagnosed and undertreated in Palestine. This study explores the relationship between social support and the severity of postpartum depression symptoms among mothers in underserved Palestinian communities.

Study Objectives: The study aimed to assess the prevalence of postpartum depression symptoms and investigate how social and emotional support influences the incidence and severity of these symptoms. The research also aimed to identify key psychosocial risk and protective factors affecting postpartum mothers in resource-limited settings.

Methods: A cross-sectional survey-based study was conducted involving 60 postpartum mothers who had given birth within the past six months. Participants were recruited both online and from primary healthcare centers across different regions of Palestine. Data collection was performed

PalStudent Journal

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to the mentioned authors at the mentioned institutes.

Copyright © 2025 Al-Quds University, Deanship of Scientific Research. All rights reserved.

E-mail: research@admin.alquds.edu

Palestine, Abu Dis, Al-Quds University



using a structured questionnaire based on the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS), along with additional questions assessing sleep duration, energy levels, emotional support, bonding with the baby, and parental adaptation. The survey was offered in Arabic and designed to be accessible to mothers from diverse backgrounds.

Results: A substantial proportion of participants (60%) reported insufficient sleep (<6 hours daily), and 88% experienced moderate to severe fatigue, limiting their ability to manage daily tasks and childcare. Emotional support was notably lacking, with 55% of mothers reporting inadequate support during the critical first six weeks postpartum. Depressive symptoms were common, with 32% of mothers experiencing persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness, and 28% reporting frequent crying spells. About 21% struggled with bonding with their newborn, and 42% reported strain in their relationship with their partner, frequently attributing this to financial burdens, lack of partner involvement, or emotional disconnection. Several participants faced additional stressors such as ectopic pregnancy, complicated deliveries, or geographical separation from family members. Despite these challenges, many mothers displayed resilience, with 65% expressing joy over their babies' milestones, and 88% feeling personal growth as parents.

Conclusions: This study confirms the high prevalence of postpartum depression symptoms among mothers in Palestinian communities and underscores the vital role of social support as a protective factor. Fatigue, inadequate sleep, and insufficient emotional and familial support emerged as key contributors to depressive symptoms. Tailored interventions that incorporate family involvement, enhance community-based support networks, and integrate mental health services into routine postpartum care are essential to mitigating postpartum depression and improving outcomes for mothers and their children.