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Anxiety and Depression Among Pregnant Women in the Gaza Strip

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Thesis Approval

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate my thesis

To my dear father, who encouraged me.

*To my mother, To the meaning of love, the meaning of compassion
,dedication and way of success that taught me*

To my dear brothers ,sisters and family who encouraged me

*To my friends who have supported and encouraged me in my studies to
complete.*

To all women in Palestine, particularly lived in the Gaza Strip.

And to everyone who contributed to make this study .

With Love and Respect.

Eslam Farhat Murtaja

Declaration

I declare that this thesis submitted for the degree of master in communitymental health is my own work , and it has not been submitted anywherefor a higher degree in any university or institution.

Signature:

Eslam Farhat Murtaja

Acknowledgment

First all praise to Allah, that help me to continue my study.

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With pleasure

Eslam Murtaja

Abstract

This study aimed to explore the relationship between depression and anxiety among pregnant women in prenatal primary health care clinics in Gaza strip and identify the impact of other variables on this relationship. Descriptive analytic, cross sectional design was used. By using three applied tools as follow: socio-demographic characteristic questionnaire, Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale, Beck Depression Inventory Scale and. The stratified sample was done and consisted of 400 pregnant women from five different governorates in Gaza Strip (North Gaza, Gaza, Middle Zone, Khan Younis and Rafah), Most of the participant's ages less than 35years. The study showed sever depression symptoms was (10.5%), moderate depression symptoms was (13.7%), and mild depression symptoms (34.8%). Also the results showed the pregnant women which follow ups in primary care have anxiety with low degree, the arithmetic mean for anxiety scale was 0.89, with standard deviation was 0.61. The study found there was positive correlation with statistical significance between depression & the anxiety for follow ups Pregnant women with primary care in Gaza Strip at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$). And the study showed that there was significant differences in depression due to the Qualification, There are no statistically significant differences, at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) among the averages of the respondents answers about the depression and anxiety due to the age. And there was significant differences in depression and anxiety due to the educational qualification for the husband, and there was significant differences in depression due to the place of residence. the study found that there was significant differences in the depression and anxiety due to the family type, and the difference in favor of extended family. and there was significant differences in depression and anxiety due to the number of family members, and there was no differences in depression and anxiety due to the monthly income. and there was significant differences in the depression and anxiety due to the Clinic type at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$), and there was significant differences in favor of UNRWA Clinics.. The conclusion of study was psychological problem against pregnant women, is greatly influenced by the customs and cultures of each community, has a major contribution to the development of depression and anxiety in women.

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List of abbreviations

| | |
|--------------|---|
| ACT | Acceptance and Commitment Therapy |
| ANOVA | Analysis of Variables |
| BA | Behavioral Activation |
| BDI | Beck Depression Inventory Scale |
| CBT | Cognitive-behavioral therapy |
| CTS | Conflict Tactics Scale |
| DSM | Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of mental disorders |
| GABA | Gamma-Amino Butyric Acid |
| GG | Gaza Governorates |
| GAD | Generalized anxiety disorder |
| HAMS | Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale |
| IPT | Interpersonal Therapy |
| IPV | Intimate partner violence |
| MOH | Ministry of Health |
| MAOIs | Monoamine oxidase inhibitors |
| NGO | Non Governmental Organizations |
| OCD | Obsessive-compulsive disorder |
| PCBS | Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics |
| PNGO | Palestinian Non Governmental Organizations |
| PTSD | post-traumatic stress disorder |
| SAD | Seasonal affective disorder |
| SPSS | Statistical Package for Social Sciences |
| UNRWA | United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine |
| WHO | World Health Organization |

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Background:

In the last seven years, three serious military wars have been carried out by Israel's occupation against the Palestinian people in Gaza strip. Women in Gaza face significant challenges particularly in light of the on-going Israeli occupation and siege as well as periodic military wars in Gaza strip. In the absence of any solution, Palestinians especially women living in Gaza today remain at high risk of mental illness due to on-going conflict, blockade, and the prolonged occupation, there are many forms of suffering that the Palestinian people experience such as unemployment, poverty, security instability, and siege. All of these factors when combined together increase domestic violence which may increase mental health disorders. The researcher considers this situation surely affects pregnant women, as it is well known that they are the weakest group in the Palestinian community.

Historically, pregnancy has been viewed as a period of well-being that allowed women to feel biologically complete and provided protection for some women against psychiatric disorders, frequently seen as a period of emotional well-being, although for many women it's time for enjoyment and fulfillment, at the same time may also represent a moment of stress and changes. Stressful situations such as domestic violence are considered to be mental disorder triggers, and such disorders are the most common health problems associated to pregnancy and postpartum period anxiety and depression (Dennis, 2007).

Traumatic stress is thought to be the main mechanism that explains why intimate partner violence may cause subsequent depression and suicide attempts. Exposures to traumatic events can lead to stress, fear and isolation, which, in turn, may lead to depression and suicidal behaviour (WHO, 2013)

The present study deals with pregnant women in trying to identify the relationship between depression and anxiety. Depression during the perinatal period can have devastating consequences, not only for the women experiencing it, but also for the women's children and family (Alder, 2007; Burke, 2003).