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A prospective study to find the effect of antepartum depression on the outcome of pregnancy and infant growth in Chennai

A.S.M.Sundari¹, Vaishnavi Ramaswamy¹, Smitha.B¹, Padma Priya.B¹, S.Priyadharshini¹,
J.Priyadharshini¹, Sudharshini Subramaniam²

Affiliation: 1.A.S.M.Sundari, Final year MBBS, Madras Medical College, Chennai-03, 2. 6. Associate Professor, Institute of Community Medicine, Madras Medical College, Chennai-03

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***Author for correspondence:** Dr.Sudharshini Subramaniam, Associate Professor, Institute of Community Medicine, Madras Medical College, Chennai-600003. E-mail address : sudharshinisubramaniam90@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Background: Antenatal depression was observed to have negative bearing on birth outcomes. There is paucity in the evidence of antepartum depression and its influence on outcomes of pregnancy and neonatal growth from India. **Objective:** To assess the effect of antepartum depression on birth outcomes among pregnant women in their third trimester attending antenatal care in Urban Primary Health Centres of Chennai. **Methods:** A prospective cohort study was done wherein pregnant women (n=202) in their third trimester were followed up till their delivery. Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS) was used to assess depression. Score of ≥ 13 was considered positive for antenatal depression. Information about the birth outcomes were extracted from the hospital records and for women who delivered elsewhere, they were followed up by making a telephone call. The birth outcomes that were assessed in this study included low birth weight (birth weight <2.5kg), prematurity (babies born <37 weeks of gestation) and any complications during delivery. **Results :** The prevalence of antenatal depression was found to be 15.8% with 95% Confidence interval of 10.68%-20.92%. After adjusting for age of mother, previous conception and other comorbid conditions during pregnancy, mothers with antenatal depression were found to have 1.565, 0.990, 1.530 times increased risk of delivering a LBW, preterm babies and developing complications during delivery. **Conclusion:** Depression is common in women especially during pregnancy. It is associated with delivery of low birth weight babies, premature deliveries, more caesarean sections and increased complications during delivery. Hence identifying antenatal depression earlier in pregnancy is recommended so that appropriate interventions could be given.

Key Words: Antenatal Depression, Birth Outcomes, Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS).