

Abstract

Assessing female non-postpartum adolescents' knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs of depression and postpartum depression

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Symptoms of postpartum depression have been identified in up to 47% of postpartum adolescents less than 18 years of age (Barnet, et al., 1996; Miller, 1998), and less than a third of all women receive treatment (Boyd & Amsterdam, 2004). Untreated postpartum depression is detrimental to both the infant and mother. Little is known about the attitudes, beliefs, and knowledge held by adolescents about depression and postpartum depression. Beliefs about mental health treatment are long standing and do not develop just in response to pregnancy and childbearing, but are thought to be barriers to treatment.

This exploratory study using a focus group of non-childbearing females (n=10), age 13-17 from a local Teen Pregnancy Prevention Clinic; will examine the attitudes, beliefs, and knowledge of depression, postpartum depression, and mental health treatment.

Instruments, Attitude Towards Seeking Professional Psychological Help Scale (Fischer & Farina, 1995), and Stigma Scale for Receiving Psychological Help (Komiya, et al., 2000), will be piloted in this population. Data analysis from the focus groups as well as from above instruments will be used to develop future studies, and overcome barriers to mental health treatment.