

Exploring the Moral Implications of Postpartum Depression: An Interdisciplinary Approach

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Overview

- Introduction to postpartum depression (Brooke)
- Multidisciplinary analysis of moral implications
 - Business and economy (Michael)
 - Theology (Citali)
 - Social support (Pam)
 - Risk factors and medical impact (Brooke)
- A note on language...

Introduction

- **What**

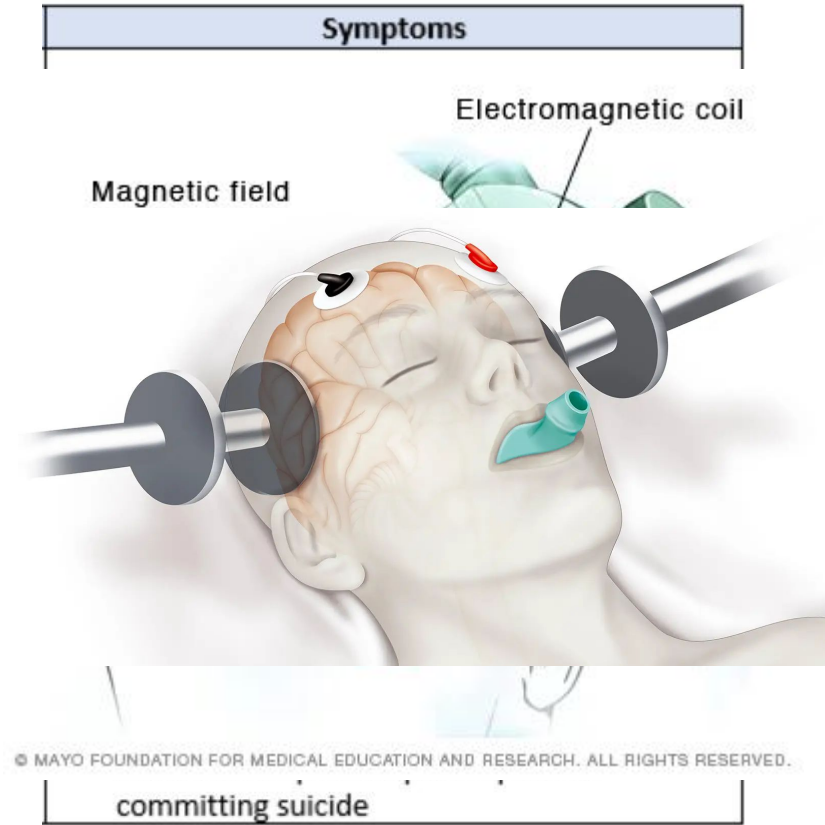
- DSM-5: **Major depressive episode** (5+ symptoms lasting >2w) **within peripartum period** (onset of pregnancy or within 4w of delivery)

- **Who**

- 1/7 women

- **Treatment**

- First-line: **psychotherapy** + antidepressants (SSRIs)
- Alternate: Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS)
- Alternate: Electroconvulsive therapy (ECT)
- Often involves trial and error



Circumstances of the American Postpartum Period: An Overview

- Nuclear family structure with lack of intergenerational support
- Cultural expectations for birthing people:
 - Body change/weight loss
 - Containment
 - Feeding: exclusive breastfeeding
 - Focus on the baby over personal needs
- Physical healing, learning to parent, and major relationship and role transitions
- Fear of getting help: institutionalization, separation and law enforcement involvement
- Characterized by individualism and isolation

Holistic Care Perspective

Concern for severe outcomes - loss of life, loss of parent, loss of relationships, employment, cultural and familial trauma

Treatment is insufficient or inaccessible for many

Western, white, individualistic culture of postpartum period isn't serving birthing people well

Impacts of Postpartum from an economic lens

Untreated mood & anxiety disorders highly prevalent among new and pregnant parents

\$14.2B -> Costs to US healthcare system when following mom and child pair 5 years after birth.

7 -> Percent of women affected by perinatal mood/anxiety disorder, regardless of income.

Disproportionately impacts lower income families (est. as high as 40 - 60%)

What are the true costs?

Reduced workforce productivity

Increased reliance on public benefits

Increased healthcare costs for treating maternal & child health

Risk Factors + Medical Implications

● Risk factors

- **History of depression (OR=29)**
- Fear of childbirth (OR=3.8) --->modifiable!!!
- Tobacco use, adolescence (OR= 3.25, 3.14)
--->maybe modifiable
- Single, lower SES (OR=2.59)
- Military spouse deployment during delivery (OR=1.1)

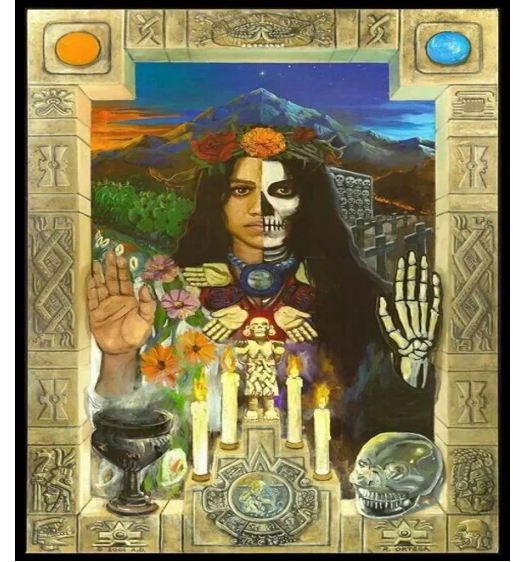
● Medical Implications

- **Child**
 - Failure to thrive
 - Attachment disorder
 - Developmental delay at 1y
- **Mother**
 - Suicide
 - More common cause of peripartum mortality than postpartum hemorrhage or hypertensive disorders
 - Postpartum weight retention

$$OR = \frac{(n) \text{ exposed cases} / (n) \text{ unexposed cases}}{(n) \text{ exposed non -cases} / (n) \text{ unexposed non -cases}}$$

Domains	Milestone	Attained at	Normal
Gross motor	Neck holding	9 months	3 months
	Sitting with support	1.2 years	6 months
	Rest	not attained	-
Fine motor	Bidextrous grasp	8 to 9 months	4 months
	Unidextrous grasp	1 year	6 months
	Reaches for object	1.5 year	6 months
	Rest	Not attained	-
Language	Turns head to sound	6-7 months	1 month
	Cooing	1.2 years	3 months
	Rest	Not attained	-
Personal and social	Social smile	9 months	2 months
	Recognizes mother	1 year	3 months

Cultural and Religious Symbolism Related to Postpartum Depression



La Virgen - Malinche Dualism

- La Virgen de Guadalupe
 - Symbolic Catholic figure in the Mexican community
 - Salvific
 - Healing powers
 - Protective
- La Malinche
 - Myth that originates in Mexico
 - Translator for Hernán Cortés
 - Traitor
 - Enemy



La Malinche Extended to La Llorona

- Myth in many countries in Latin America
- Mother who drowned her children
- Continues to haunt bodies of water - crying for her children
 - Fear her or sympathize with her
 - Signs of Remorse
- “grieving, haunting mothers reaching for their children across fluid boundaries.”



Cultural Needs - Cuarentena

- Around 40 days after giving birth
- Special bonding time for birth-givers
- Support system
 - Family, friends, and partner
- Binding of abdomen - *faja*



Call for Interdependence in Community

- Moral obligation for everyone to play a role
- Interprofessionally
 - Advocacy for the actions of birthing, parenting as essential part of our society
- Break isolation and hyper independence with care