



MATERNAL MENTAL HEALTH FACT SHEET

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<https://policycentermmh.org/maternal-mental-health-fact-sheet/>

Prevalence & Range of Disorders

Maternal Mental Health disorders, like postpartum depression, are the leading complication of childbirth, impacting 1 in 5 U.S. women.¹ It's not just depression; there are a range of maternal mental health (MMH) disorders, which also include, anxiety, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), bipolar disorder, and psychosis.

Depression

- Postpartum depression (PPD) diagnosis rates increased from 9.4% in 2010 to 19.0% in 2021²
- It's not just the postpartum; maternal depression occurs as frequently during pregnancy as it does during the postpartum period.³
- Maternal depression can happen anytime during the perinatal period. In the largest postpartum depression screening study conducted in the US:⁴
 - 40.1% of depressive episodes onset during the postpartum period
 - 33.4% onset during pregnancy
 - 26.5% onset before pregnancy

Anxiety, Obsessive Compulsive, and Bipolar Disorders

- 20% of women experience maternal anxiety disorders, with the highest rates occurring during early pregnancy (25.5%).^{5, 6}
- The prevalence rate of OCD is 8% during the prenatal period and 17% in the postpartum period.⁷

In women without a psychiatric condition before the perinatal period, the prevalence of bipolar disorder is 2.6%. In women with an existing bipolar diagnosis, 54.9% have at least one bipolar-spectrum mood episode occurrence in the perinatal period.⁸

Why It Matters

- Depression during pregnancy can cause preterm birth and babies with low birth weight.⁹
- Untreated MMH disorders can lead to negative early childhood development outcomes.¹⁰
- Untreated MMH disorders are estimated to have an annual economic cost of 14.2 billion dollars.¹¹

A Leading Cause of Preventable Maternal Death

- MMH conditions (suicide and overdose) are the leading cause of pregnancy-related death.¹²
- 20% of maternal deaths are due to suicide.¹³

Detection & Treatment

- Screening is the process used to detect mental health disorders. It consists of a questionnaire used to understand if/what symptoms exist.
- Though awareness and federal efforts have been increasing, less than 20% of women are screened for MMH disorders.¹⁴
- Less than 15% of women receive treatment for maternal depression:¹⁵
 - 15% receive treatment for postpartum depression
 - 13% receive treatment for depression during pregnancy
 - Less than 9% receive adequate treatment
 - Less than 5 % achieve remission



Risk Factors

- A history of prior psychiatric disorders increases a woman's risk of developing a maternal mental health disorder.¹⁶
- Those living in poverty suffer from PPD at double the rate of those who don't live in poverty.¹⁷
- With a greater number of women unable to terminate unplanned pregnancies, rates of depression and anxiety are expected to rise significantly.

Disparities

- People of color have an increased risk for MMH disorders, like depression:
- Up to 30% of American Indians & Alaskan Natives suffer from PPD.¹⁸
- Up to 40% of Black and Latina moms suffer from PPD, twice the rate of their White counterparts.¹⁹
- Latina and Black women are 57% and 41%, respectively, less likely to start treatment for maternal depression than White women.²⁰
- There was a 280% increase in PPD diagnoses for Asian American and Pacific Islanders from 2010-2021.²
- Gen Z is more than twice as likely as Boomers to suffer from a mental health disorder.²¹