Outcome of post-partum depression four years after childbirth

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Objective: Post-partum depression influences women's mental health in the long term. This study examined the prevalence of depression and psychiatric distress related to general medical illnesses of women who have experienced post-partum depression four years before.

Methods: In a prospective longitudinal study, 204 women who had been exposed to post-partum depression four years before the study and 467 controls evaluated by Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS), Life Event Rating Scale (LERS), General Health Questionnaire-28 items (GHQ-28) and a questionnaire asking physical and other mental health problems. Chi-Square, T-tests and multiple logistic regression analysis was used to examine differences between two groups.

Results: Women with a history of post-partum depression were two times more likely to experience recurrent depression (OR= 2.16, 95%CI: 1.38-3.36). They were also more likely to experience physical and mental health problems and used more daily medications four years after child birth.

Conclusions: Post-partum depression predisposes women to recurrent depression and other mental and physical health problems.