

Postnatal Depression in Chinese Women - An Overlooked Problem?

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It was generally believed that postnatal depression is a rare event in Chinese communities, but recent reports in the mass media and medical literature have suggested otherwise. Using the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS) as the instrument to assess postnatal mood changes, studies conducted both in China and Hong Kong have found that the incidence of a high score, which suggested significant depression symptoms, was found in 10% to 15% of postnatal subjects. These figures were similar to the incidence reported from western countries. Certain factors, such as stressful life events, unsatisfactory relationship with spouse, and lack of assistance in baby care after discharge, appeared to be important determinants. These observations could be a reflection of the progressively westernized life style, with changes in cultural habits and family structure that have occurred in the past two decades. Screening of postnatal women may help to minimize the impact and possible consequences of postnatal depression. (HKJGOM 2000 ; 1 : 113 - 115)

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在中國人的社會裡，一般都認為產後抑鬱是比較少發生；但最近傳媒和醫學文獻的報導卻有很大的出入。中國國內和香港，都有採用愛丁堡產后抑鬱量表 (EPDS) 來評估產婦在產后的情緒。研究結果顯示產婦有產后抑鬱傾向者佔10-15%。這發生率與西方裡產后抑鬱研究的數字相若。產后抑鬱症的發生，可能與多種因素有關，例如：曾經在過去一年經歷過有帶來壓力的事情、與配偶的關係比較差、沒有他人協助照顧嬰兒等。這些觀察可能是反影近二十年來，逐漸西化的生活模式，包括了文化習慣和家庭結構的轉變。在產后為產婦作出的評估，可有助舒緩產后情緒變化和抑鬱所帶來的不良後果。
