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Perceptions of postnatal depression across countries and cultures: From a TransCultural Study of PostNatal Depression (TCS-PND)

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This session will be dedicated to the memory of Professor Channi Kumar.

Objectives

The qualitative study was conducted within the international “Transcultural study of postnatal depression (PND)” in 17 centres located in 13 different countries. The aim was to explore perceptions of PND by lay and professional key informants, specifically regarding description of symptoms, awareness of this pathology and of possible care.

Methods

Broad areas of inquiry and open-ended probes were developed by the TCS-PND research group during international workshops to obtain data comparable between countries on perceptions of PND. A non-random convenience sampling method was used to recruit postpartum mothers for focus groups, and fathers and grandmothers for interviews. Influential healthcare planners and clinicians were interviewed as professional key informants in each centre. Within sites, transcripts of focus groups and interviews underwent a process of text analysis in the original language until exhaustive theme extraction was achieved. Themes (in English) from all the centres were combined into broader categories and after consensus discussions these categories were revalidated.

Results and discussion

Qualitative data were supplemented in each centre with sociodemographic data to address the issues of: (i) whether perceptions of PND are related to some specific cultural perception of mental health and/or of status of parenthood and (ii) how high or low levels of general care and specificity of health policy relate to differences in perception of needs for care. Data collected using the same probes and methodology in different countries and cultures has enabled a comparative analysis of perceptions of PND. In addition it has shown that, although not described with the same words, PND is a well-recognised condition by recent mothers in all countries in this study. Data on focus groups and interviews from selected countries are given in the following abstracts to illustrate some similarities and differences in perceptions between countries.