

Depression among Pregnant Women with Husbands Abroad during the Pregnancy

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Abstract : Introduction: Depression is emerging as a major public health problem in all parts of the world. Developing countries have a unique socioeconomic structure that affects the lives of its inhabitants in several ways. Going abroad for employment is one of the common social problems which have been faced by young males in developing countries. This included both highly qualified individuals as well as the labor class. Objective: To determine the difference in the presence of depressive symptoms among pregnant women with husbands living abroad and those with husbands living with them in Azad Jammu and Kashmir. Methods: The sample population comprised of pregnant women reporting for an antenatal checkup at Amna hospital Rawalakot. Cases constituted the pregnant women with husbands living abroad while controls were the pregnant women with husbands living with them. Patient health questionnaire-9 (PHQ-9) was used to record the presence and severity of depressive symptoms. Age, gestation, parity, rural or urban origin, education, level of family income, daily contact hours on the telephone or what's app, previous pregnancy loss or complications, number of years abroad and visits to home per year were associated with the presence of depressive symptoms. Findings: The mean age of the study participants was 29.73 ± 5.395 years. Sixty-six had significant depression in the case group, while 14 had in the control group ($p\text{-value} < 0.001$). Education and rural background had a significant difference between the case and the control group. Less number of visits per year of the husband was strongly linked with the presence of depressive symptoms among the cases. Conclusion: Pregnant women with husbands abroad were found more prone to develop depressive symptoms as compared to those with husbands living with them. Special attention should be paid to the women whose husband had a lesser number of visits to the country.

Keywords : depression, pregnancy, lack of support, war zone

Conference Title : ICPMD 2020 : International Conference on Psychiatry and Mental Disorders

Conference Location : Cape Town, South Africa

Conference Dates : November 05-06, 2020