

Assessing Perinatal Mental Illness during the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Review of Measurement Tools

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Abstract : Background and Significance: Perinatal mental illness covers a wide range of conditions and has a huge influence on maternal-child health. Issues and challenges with perinatal mental health have been associated with poor pregnancy, birth, and postpartum outcomes. It is estimated that one out of five new and expectant mothers experience some degree of perinatal mental illness, which makes this a hugely significant health outcome. Certain factors increase the maternal risk for mental illness. Challenges related to poverty, migration, extreme stress, exposure to violence, emergency and conflict situations, natural disasters, and pandemics can exacerbate mental health disorders. It is widely expected that perinatal mental health is being negatively affected during the present COVID-19 pandemic. Methods: A review of studies that reported a measurement tool to assess perinatal mental health outcomes during the COVID-19 pandemic was conducted following PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines. PubMed, CINAHL, and Google Scholar were used to search for peer-reviewed studies published after late 2019, in accordance with the emergence of the virus. The search resulted in the inclusion of ten studies. Approach to measure health outcome: The main approach to measure perinatal mental illness is the use of self-administered, validated questionnaires, usually in the clinical setting. Summary: Widespread use of these tools has afforded the clinical and research communities the ability to identify and support women who may be suffering from mental illness disorders during a pandemic. More research is needed to validate tools in other vulnerable, perinatal populations.

Keywords : mental health during covid, perinatal mental health, perinatal mental health measurement tools, perinatal mental health tools

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