

## Fathers' Depression and its Relationship with Mothers' Depression During Postpartum Period

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**Abstract :** Fathers are at risk of depression during the postpartum period. Some studies have been reported maternal depression is the key predictor of paternal postpartum depression (PPD). This study aimed to estimate the prevalence and predictors of parental PPD and its association with maternal PPD. In a cross-sectional study, via a stratified random and convenience sampling method, participants referring to health centers during 2-8 weeks postpartum were recruited from March to October 2017. Paternal PPD and its relation to maternal PPD and other related factors were assessed using multiple logistic regression. Participants were 591 literate couples who referred to Mazandaran province primary health centers during to study period. Couples were screened for depression using Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS). Fathers provided information on socio-demographic characteristics, life events, neonatal stressor, perceived stress (Perceived Stress Scale), social support (Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support), and general health status using General Health Questionnaire (GHQ) as well. Data on mothers' demographic characteristics and obstetrics factors was also gathered. Overall, 93 fathers (15.7%) and 188 mothers (31.8%) reported depressive symptoms above the cut-off EPDS score of 12. In the multiple logistic regression model, older age [OR=1.20, (95%CI: 1.05- 1.36)], maternal depressive symptoms [OR=1.15, (95%CI: 1.04-1.27)], higher GHQ scores [OR=1.21, (95%CI: 1.11-1.33)] and increased recent life events [OR=1.42, (95%CI: 1.01-1.2.00)] were related to paternal PPD. A significant inverse association was found between number of children and paternal PPD [OR=0.20, (95%CI: 0.07-0.53)]. Depressive symptoms, especially in first-time fathers following the birth of a child, are not uncommon. Maternal depressive symptoms and paternal well-being were strong predictors of parental PPD. Creating opportunities for men to access special health care services, parental education to help adapting to parenthood, screening programs, and psychiatric/psychosocial interventions to decrease the suffering of depression for both depressed parents are recommended.

**Keywords :** depression, men, postpartum, risk factors, women

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