Community Based Psychosocial Intervention Reduces Maternal Depression and Infant Development in Bangladesh

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Abstract : Abstract: Maternal depression is one of the risk factors of developmental delay in young children in low-income countries. Maternal depressions during pregnancy are rarely reported in Bangladesh. Objectives: The purpose of the present study was to examine the efficacy of a community based psychosocial intervention on women with mild to moderate depressive illness during the perinatal period and on their children from birth to 12 months on mothers' mental status and their infants' growth and development. Methodology: The study followed a prospective longitudinal approach with a randomized controlled design. Total 250 pregnant women aged between 15 and 40 years were enrolled in their third trimester of pregnancy of which 125 women were in the intervention group and 125 in the control group. Women in the intervention group received the "Thinking Healthy (CBT based) program" at their home setting, from their last month of pregnancy till 10 months after delivery. Their children received psychosocial stimulation from birth till 12 months. The following instruments were applied to get the outcome information- Bangla version of Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (BEPDS), Prenatal Attachment Inventory (PAI), Maternal Attachment Inventory (MAI), Bayley Scale of Infant Development-Third version (Bayley–III) and Family Care Indicator (FCI). In addition, sever morbidity; breastfeeding, immunization, socio-economic and demographic information were collected. Data were collected at three time points viz. baseline, midline (6 months after delivery) and endline (12 months after delivery). Results: There was no significant difference between any of the socioeconomic and demographic variables at baseline. A very preliminary analysis of the data shows an intervention effect on Socioemotional behaviour of children at endline (p<0.001), motor development at midline (p=0.016) and at endline (p=0.065), language development at midline (p=0.004) and at endline (p=0.023), cognitive development at midline (p=0.008) and at endline (p=0.002), and quality of psychosocial stimulation at midline (p=0.023) and at endline (p=0.010). EPDS at baseline was not different between the groups (p=0.419), but there was a significant improvement at midline (p=0.027) and at endline (p=0.024) between the groups following the intervention. Conclusion: Psychosocial intervention is found effective in reducing women's low and moderate depressive illness to cope with mental health problem and improving development of young children in Bangladesh.

Keywords : mental health, maternal depression, infant development, CBT, EPDS

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