

Postpartum Depression and Its Association with Food Insecurity and Social Support among Women in Post-Conflict Northern Uganda

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Abstract : Background: Postpartum depression (PPD) is a major psychiatric disorder that affects women soon after birth and in some cases, is a continuation of antenatal depression. Food insecurity (FI) and social support (SS) are known to be associated with major depressive disorder, and vice versa. This study was conducted to examine the interrelationships among FI, SS, and PPD among postpartum women in Gulu, a post-conflict region in Uganda. Methods: Cross-sectional data from postpartum women on depression symptoms, FI and SS were, respectively, obtained using the Center for Epidemiologic Studies-Depression (CES-D) scale, Individually Focused FI Access scale (IFIAS) and Duke-UNC functional social support scale. Standard regression methods were used to assess associations among FI, SS, and PPD. Results: A total of 239 women were studied, and 40% were found to have any PPD, i.e., with depressive symptom scores of ≥ 17 . The mean \pm standard deviation (SD) for FI score and SS scores were 6.47 ± 5.02 and 19.11 ± 4.23 respectively. In adjusted analyses, PPD symptoms were found to be positively associated with FI (unstandardized beta and standardized beta of 0.703 and 0.432 respectively, standard errors = 0.093 and p-value < 0.0001) and negatively associated with SS (unstandardized beta and standardized beta of -0.263 and -0.135 respectively, standard errors = 0.111 and p-value = 0.019). Conclusions: Many women in this post-conflict region reported experiencing PPD. In addition, this data suggest that food security and psychosocial support interventions may help mitigate women's experience of PPD or its severity.

Keywords : postpartum depression, food insecurity, social support, post-conflict region

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