
PERINATAL DEPRESSION AND DEPRESSIVE SYMPTOMS IN PORTUGUESE AND IMMIGRANT WOMEN

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Introduction: Immigration involves significant changes in the psychosocial context, due to losses, relationship breakdowns, lack of social support, not feeling at home, novelty, discrimination, resettlement demands (occupation, language). These life stressors might lead to psychological distress, including depression.

Objectives/Aims: To explore if there are differences in the prevalence of depression and depressive symptoms in immigrant and Portuguese women during the perinatal period.

Methods: The sample comprises 397 women. 348 (87.7%) of them were Portuguese and the remaining 49 (12.4%) were born in other Countries (5.8% Other/European, 3.8% African, 2.8% South America). They were both interviewed at the last trimester of pregnancy (T0) and at 3 months postpartum (T1), using the *Diagnostic Interview for Genetic Studies*, which allows CID-10 and DSM-IV diagnoses of depression. Both at T0 and T1, they also completed the *Postpartum Depression Screening Scale* (PDSS) to evaluate depressive symptoms.

Results: Immigrants compared with Portuguese women did not differ in respect to a CID-10/DSM-IV depression diagnosis and in respect to PDSS total scores at T0 and T1. Being immigrant is associated with higher levels of passive suicidal ideation (*death seem the only way out of this nightmare*) ($r_s=.116$, $p<.05$), feelings of loneliness ($r_s=.118$, $p<.05$) and being overwhelmed by anguished ($r_s=.134$, $p<.01$) at pregnancy and with feelings of being inadequate as a mother ($r_s=.128$, $p<.05$) at the postpartum.

Conclusions: Being immigrant might contribute to higher levels of depressive symptoms during the perinatal period, including suicidal ideation. These findings have clinical implications, while working with immigrants.