

S07-03 - PSYCHOPATHOLOGY OF PSYCHIATRIC DISORDERS DURING PREGNANCY AND POSTPARTUM

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Contrary to the previously spread myth, pregnancy does not protect women from either relapses of previously diagnosed psychiatric illness nor development of new ones. Prevalence of psychiatric illnesses during pregnancy is similar to that in the general population, whereas that number significantly increases in the postpartum period. Peripartum has its own uniqueness for both etiology and presentation of different psychopathological conditions.

Multiple studies have been published describing affective, anxiety, and psychotic illnesses in peripartum. Specific psychosocial circumstances during that time along with multiple physiological changes occurring in female body in that reproductive period predispose women with and without previous psychiatric histories, to various psychiatric illnesses. Several potential contributing factors for these phenomena have been proposed so far. One of the most frequently studied ones has been the drastic hormonal shift occurring during peripartum that could directly increase the sensitivity for developing mood instability, anxiety and/or psychotic symptoms. Genetic predisposition and previously existing psychiatric disorder especially those occurring during specific reproductive phases significantly increase the risk as well. Presentation of psychiatric illnesses during peripartum has its' particularities which are essential to understand of in order to provide an appropriate care.

Being aware of the potential etiology and risk factors as well as sensitivity to psychopathology of some women in peripartum could greatly improve treatment as well as open up avenues for prevention in this area. Unrecognized and untreated psychiatric illnesses in peripartum have serious consequences.