

A MIXED-METHODS STUDY ON MATERNAL PERSPECTIVES ON POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION SCREENING: BELIEFS, CONCERNS AND LEVEL OF COMFORT



Bianca Sanchez, Brissa Mundo-Santacruz, BS, Janet Meredith, MBA
University of Colorado School of Medicine, Anschutz Medical Campus

INTRODUCTION

- Postpartum depression (PPD) is a leading cause of morbidity and mortality among pregnant women
- The Edinburgh Postpartum Depression Scale (EPDS) screens for PPD
- It is unknown how accurate responses reflect the true experience of mothers
- Aim: To assess the maternal perspectives on the purpose of the EPDS and to identify barriers to completing the questionnaire

METHODS

- Mixed methods cross-sectional study
- Setting: academic tertiary care center
- Timeline: 2020-2021
- Population: Mothers with recent delivery
- Data source: Survey
- Data analysis: Quantitative analysis, thematic and descriptive analysis for qualitative data

RESULTS

- 31 (53%) White/Caucasian, 16 (28%) Hispanic, 5 (9%) Black or African American and 3 (5%) identified as Asian or Other. 18 (32%) with a history of depression and one third was postpartum depression.
- Most woman felt comfortable answering honestly to the EPDS questions (>60%).
- Five important themes

TABLE 1: Themes and sub-themes

Themes Subthemes	Select Quotes
Recognizing symptoms of depression	“The questions that get you to recognize symptoms that you may have not noticed were depression before.”
Stigma and guilt surrounding mental health	“Fear of being judged. Fear of doctors thinking you can't care for your child properly.”
Fear of the unknown Child custody ramifications Involuntary treatment	“Fear of having your kid taken away by family services or being thought of as a bad parent.” “Some people may not want to be put on medication or fear that if they answer honestly their child(ren) may be taken from them or they may need admitted to a mental health facility.”
Inefficient Format Difficult to understand	“The ‘answers’ are confusing. It would be helpful if they were more clear... answers such as ‘as much as I ever have’ are confusing.”
Importance of doctor patient relationship	“May prefer being asked by the provider as that may open the topics to be discussed or normalize the feelings a bit more.”

Comfort levels answering EPDS (n=58)

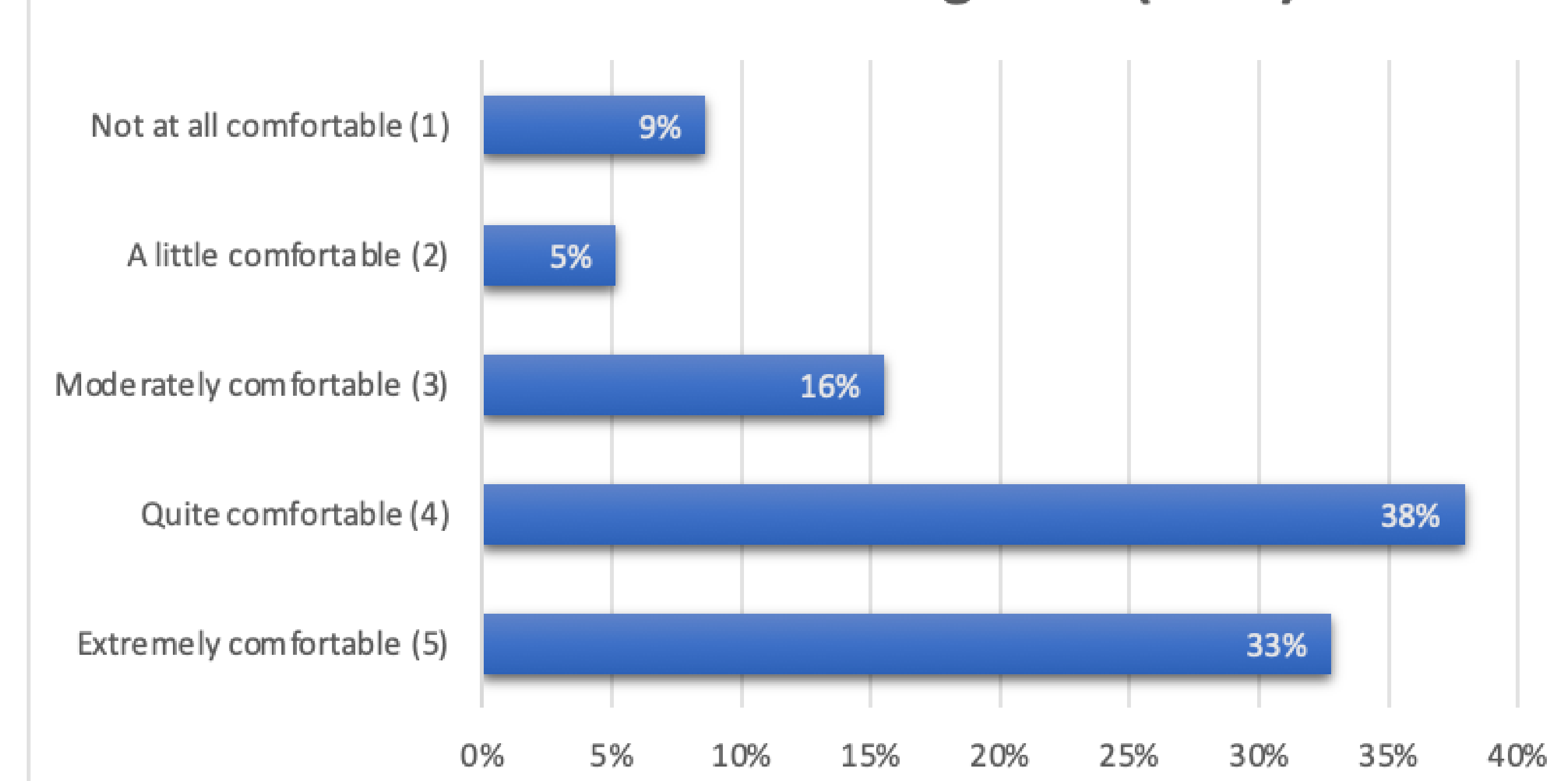


Figure 1. Comfort levels answering EPDS

EPDS as appropriate measurement of PP mental health (n=58)

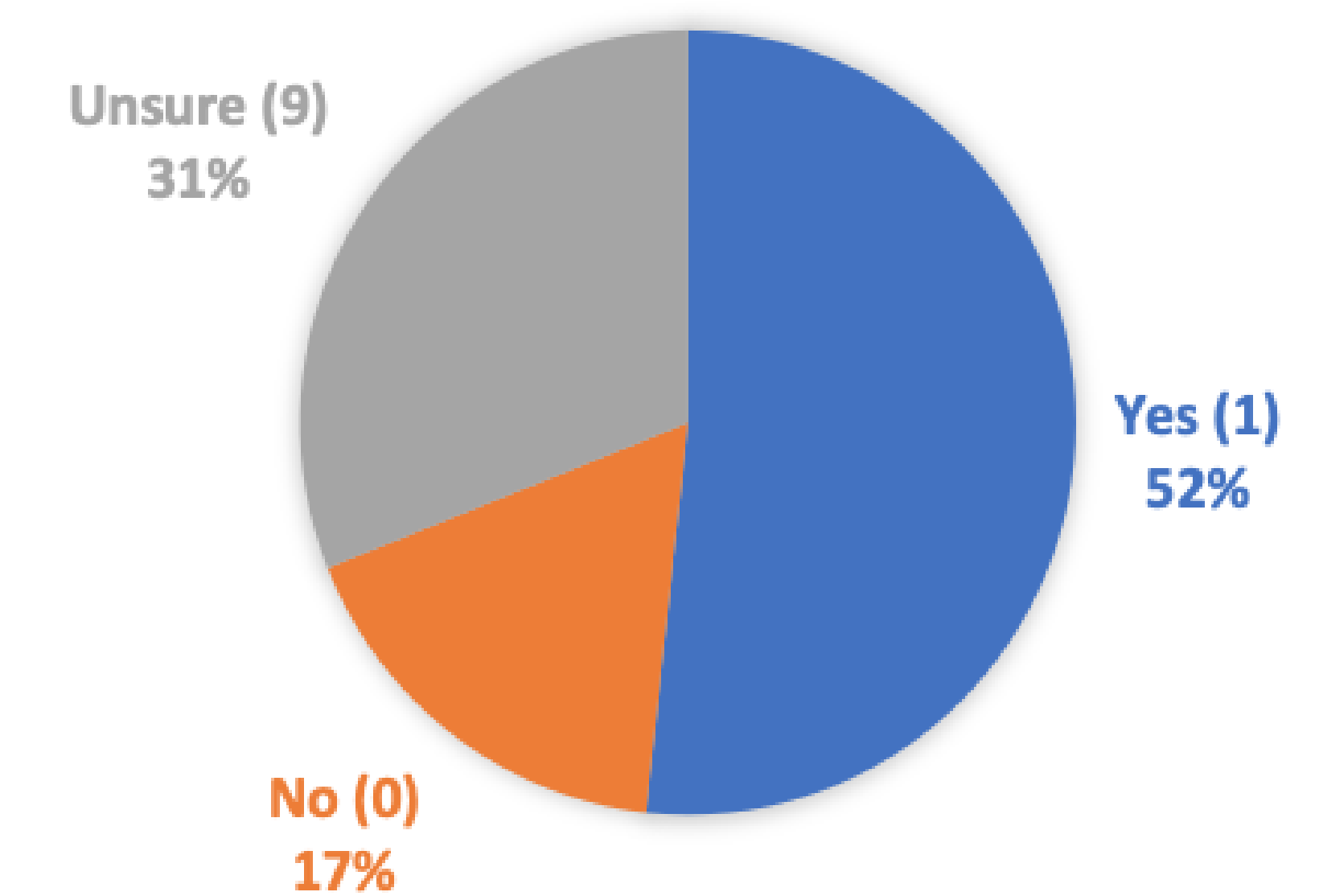


Figure 2. Patient opinion on usefulness of EPDS

SUGGESTIONS

- Educating mothers as part of the screen.
- Clear next steps if screen positive.
- An initial conversation with trusted provider.
- Verbal in person screening
- Option for home screening, in a more private environment.

The EPDS needs to be more educational and transparent to accurately screen for PPD.

CONCLUSIONS

- Women in the postpartum period are at high risk for experiencing untreated postpartum depression due to fear of not knowing what will happen if they screen positive.
- It is imperative EPDS becomes more transparent to improve the screening sensitivity.