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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes Subthemes</th>
<th>Select Quotes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recognizing symptoms of depression</td>
<td>“The questions that get you to recognize symptoms that you may have not noticed were depression before.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stigma and guilt surrounding mental health</td>
<td>“Fear of being judged. Fear of doctors thinking you can't care for your child properly.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fear of the unknown</td>
<td>“Fear of having your kid taken away by family services or being thought of as a bad parent.”</td>
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<td>Fear of the unknown Child custody ramifications</td>
<td>“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.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fear of the unknown Involuntary treatment</td>
<td>“The ‘answers’ are confusing. It would be helpful if they were more clear… answers such as ‘as much as I ever have’ are confusing.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inefficient Format</td>
<td>“May prefer being asked by the provider as that may open the topics to be discussed or normalize the feelings a bit more.”</td>
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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.