

# One-third of pregnant women report mental distress during pandemic

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(HealthDay)—Nearly one in three pregnant women have reported elevated symptoms of mental health distress and a negative impact on health behaviors during the COVID-19 pandemic, according to a study published in the January issue of the *Journal of Affective Disorders Reports*.

Karmel W. Choi, Ph.D., from Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, and colleagues assessed the impacts of COVID-19 on sleep, fitness, and diet and examined specific associations with elevated symptoms of

depression and/or anxiety during pregnancy. The survey included 3,696 [pregnant women](#) across 12 countries.

The researchers found that 33 percent of women reported at least a "moderate" impact of COVID-19 on sleep, 27 percent on diet, and 44 percent on fitness, while 12, 8, and 23 percent, respectively, reported at least "a lot" of impact on these [health behaviors](#). Across the health behavior domains, women reporting a greater cumulative impact showed higher odds of mental health distress (odds ratio, 1.42 for every unit increase in the cumulative impact score). There was a consistent dose-response relationship noted with clinically elevated mental health distress, with the highest odds seen in women reporting the greatest level of impact versus no impact (odds ratios, 11.40, 4.72, and 3.35 for sleep, diet, and fitness, respectively).

"Attention to sleep, diet, and fitness-related disruptions—and particularly [sleep](#)—may be important for mental health promotion during pregnancy in the midst of a major stressor," the authors write.

One author is the founder and CEO of a company providing [medical information](#) for pregnant women.

**More information:** [Abstract/Full Text](#)

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