

Postpartum anxiety more common than depression

4 March 2013



Image courtesy of Blausen Medical

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(HealthDay)—Postpartum anxiety is more common than depression in the days and months following delivery, and is associated with adverse maternal health outcomes and reduced duration of breastfeeding, according to a study published online March 4 in *Pediatrics*.

Ian M. Paul, M.D., from Penn State University in Hershey, and colleagues compared correlates of anxiety with correlates of depression among 1,123 mothers with "well" [newborns](#) born 34 weeks' gestation. To assess health care use, breastfeeding duration, anxiety, and depression, participants were interviewed in-person during the postpartum stay and by telephone surveys at two weeks, two months, and six months. All participants planned to breastfeed.

The researchers found that, at baseline, 17 percent of participants were positive on the State Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) and 6 percent were positive on the Edinburgh [Postnatal Depression Survey](#) (EPDS). There was a significant association between primiparity and a positive STAI (20 versus 15 percent; $P = 0.02$), but not a positive EPDS (4 versus 7 percent; $P = 0.05$).

Cesarean delivery, reduced duration of breastfeeding, and increased maternal, but not infant, total unplanned health care utilization within two weeks of delivery were all significantly associated with positive STAI scores. At each assessment through six months postpartum, positive STAI scores occurred more frequently than positive EPDS scores.

"Postpartum state anxiety is a common, acute phenomenon during the [maternity](#) hospitalization that is associated with increased maternal health care utilization after discharge and reduced [breastfeeding](#) duration," write the authors. "State anxiety screening during the postpartum stay could improve these outcomes."

More information: [Abstract](#)
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APA citation: Postpartum anxiety more common than depression (2013, March 4) retrieved 3 May 2021 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2013-03-postpartum-anxiety-common-depression.html>

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