

Depression symptoms among men when their partners are pregnant

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Men who were stressed or in poor health had elevated depression symptoms when their partners were pregnant and nine months after the birth of their child, according to the results of a study of expectant and new fathers in New Zealand published online by *JAMA Psychiatry*.

The research by Lisa Underwood, Ph.D., of the University of Auckland, New Zealand, and coauthors follows up on their studies of perinatal depression in mothers.

The current study examined antenatal depression symptoms (ADS, before birth) and postnatal depression symptoms (PDS, after birth) in 3,523 men who completed interviews while their partner was in the third trimester of pregnancy and nine months after the birth of their child. The men were an average age of 33 at the antenatal interview.

The authors report 2.3 percent of [fathers](#) (82 men) were affected by elevated ADS during their partner's pregnancy and 4.3 percent of fathers (153 men) were affected by elevated PDS nine months after the child was born.

Elevated depression symptoms for men during a partner's pregnancy were associated with perceived stress and fair to [poor health](#), while elevated [depression symptoms](#) in fathers after a child's birth were associated with perceived stress in pregnancy, no longer being in a relationship with the mother, having fair to poor health, being unemployed and having a history of depression, according to the article.

Limitations of the study include that the results may not be generalizable to the first and second trimesters of pregnancy or to the period immediately following the child's [birth](#).

"Only relatively recently has the influence of fathers on children been recognized as vital for adaptive psychosocial and cognitive development.

Given that [paternal depression](#) can have direct or indirect effects on children, it is important to recognize and treat symptoms among fathers early and the first step in doing that is arguably increasing awareness among fathers about increased risks," the article concludes.

More information: *JAMA Psychiatry*. Published online February 15, 2017. [DOI: 10.1001/jamapsychiatry.2016.4234](#)

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