

# Postpartum hospital admissions for women with intellectual and developmental disabilities

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College Hospital, University of Toronto, Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences, and Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, Toronto, Canada, and University of Ottawa, Canada, concluded that the higher rates of postpartum hospital and [emergency department](#) visits among women with intellectual and development disabilities demonstrates the potential vulnerability of these women to postpartum complications and the need for more preventive care. They discuss the potential implications of their findings in the article entitled "Postpartum Acute Care Utilization Among Women with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities."

An Editorial in *Journal of Women's Health* by Monika Mitra, PhD, The Heller School for Social Policy and Management, Brandeis University, Waltham, MA, emphasizes the additional postpartum challenges this population of women face, including limited social and emotional support and significant disparities in maternal and birth outcomes. In addition to these challenges, these women "are faced with significant discrimination that likely reflects societal bias against them," states Dr. Mitra in the article "Postpartum Health of Women with Intellectual and Development Disabilities: A Call to Action."

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A new study has shown that women with intellectual and developmental disabilities had nearly twice the risk of a hospital or emergency department visit with the first few weeks after giving birth compared to women without these disabilities. The researchers reported their results and how medical versus psychiatric reasons contributed to the differences in the need for acute postpartum care in *Journal of Women's Health*.

Hilary Brown, PhD, and coauthors from Women's

"Whereas it has been clear that women with disabilities are more likely to have pregnancy complications, this study sheds light on the greater [health](#) risks these [women](#) face during the [postpartum period](#)," says Susan G. Kornstein, MD, Editor-in-Chief of *Journal of Women's Health*, Executive Director of the Virginia Commonwealth University Institute for Women's Health, Richmond, VA, and President of the Academy of Women's Health. "These results emphasize the need to monitor these patients more closely and consider safeguards that could lower their risk for postpartum health issues."

**More information:** Hilary K. Brown et al,  
Postpartum Acute Care Utilization Among Women  
with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities,  
*Journal of Women's Health* (2017). [DOI:  
10.1089/jwh.2016.5979](https://doi.org/10.1089/jwh.2016.5979)

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