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Maternal depression and suicide at immediate prenatal and early postpartum periods and psychosocial risk factors

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Abstract

Maternal depression has been intensively explored; however, less attention has been paid to maternal suicide. No studies to date have observed maternal depression and suicide at immediate prenatal and early postpartum stages. In total, 213 Chinese women were recruited in hospitals after they were admitted for childbirth. All women completed a short-term longitudinal survey at perinatal stages. Women had lower depression scores (6.65) and higher suicidal ideation incidence (11.74%) after childbirth. Prenatal depression raised the possibility of prenatal suicidal ideation, while prenatal depression and suicidal ideation increased postpartum depression and suicidal ideation. At immediate prenatal stage, marital satisfaction protected them from depression, while miscarriage experiences and self-esteem increased the risk. At early postpartum stage, in contrast, being first-time mother, marital satisfaction, and harmony with mother-in-law prevented them from depression. Our study is among the first to confirm that women have decreased depression but increased suicidal ideation at early postpartum, and the causal relationship between them, which are worthy of public attention. Potential protective (marital satisfaction, being first-time mother, and harmony with mother-in-law) or risk factors (miscarriage experiences and self-esteem) of maternal depression and suicidal ideation are identified at perinatal stages. This offers reliable guidance for clinical practice of health care.

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