



Effective Health Care

Efficacy and Safety of Screening and Treatment of Postpartum Depression

Nomination Summary Document

Results of Topic Selection Process & Next Steps

- Efficacy and safety of screening and treatment of postpartum depression will go forward for refinement as a systematic review. The scope of this topic, including populations, interventions, comparators, and outcomes, will be further developed in the refinement phase.
- When key questions have been drafted, they will be posted on the AHRQ Web site and open for public comment. To sign up for notification when this and other Effective Health Care (EHC) Program topics are posted for public comment, please go to <http://effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/index.cfm/join-the-email-list1/>.

Topic Description

Nominator: Government agency

Nomination Summary: The nominator asks about the effectiveness and safety of screening and treatment for depression in postpartum women.

Staff-Generated PICO:

Population(s): All postpartum women up to 1 year postpartum (including intrauterine fetal demise, preterm, and term deliveries), with consideration of efficacy and safety of approaches in different populations (Medicaid or CHIP enrollees; racially, ethnically, and socioeconomically diverse populations; women with prenatal or preconception depression; age groups; women whose children were born preterm or with developmental disorders; and others)

Intervention(s): Screening and treatment for depression

Comparator(s): Different approaches to screening and treatment, including different providers/access points (e.g., ob/gyn, pediatrician, community based, primary care), various screening tools, medication, cognitive, individual or group, and hormonal therapies

Outcome(s): Effectiveness of screening approaches, safety and efficacy of treatment, improvements in depressive symptoms, parenting skills, and quality of life

Key Questions from Nominator: 1. For women in the postpartum period, what is the effectiveness and safety of screening and treatment for depression?

Considerations

- The topic meets all EHC Program selection criteria. (For more information, see <http://effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/index.cfm/submit-a-suggestion-for-research/how-are-research-topics-chosen/>.)
- Postpartum depression affects many women the first year after birth. In addition to the adverse effects of depression on mothers and their quality of life, postpartum depression is thought to have possible adverse effects on maternal-infant interactions and bonding, child development, and breastfeeding.
- There is a lack of clear consensus or consistent recommendations regarding screening and treatment of postpartum depression. A systematic review on this topic may clarify some key questions about screening and treatment, and identify areas for future research. Therefore, this topic will go forward as a new comparative effectiveness review by the EHC Program, and will likely include comparisons between general versus targeted screening, timing of screening interventions, screening instruments, intervention settings, and treatments. The incidence and prevalence of postpartum and antenatal depression are very similar; therefore, the review will be broadened to screening and treatment of perinatal depression.