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Study into Postpartum Stress

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Introduction: Postpartum depression is a major public health issue. Married or partnered women with ongoing low spousal support from partners are more likely to suffer from postpartum depression (Yaksi & Save 2021). Lack of emotional support from a spouse, verbal or physical abuse, and unintended pregnancies may further increase the risk of PPD (Kızılırmak, Calpbiniçi, Tabakan, & Kartal, 2021). This lack of support from the home adds to the stress and hormonal effects a woman may experience during and after her pregnancy. The purpose of this two phase study is to identify the impact of stress arousal on postpartum women and to identify areas to explore within postpartum depression and spousal support.

Methods: Phase one of the study explored and identified factors that may cause an increase in stress levels in women postpartum. Using a cross-sectional study ,21 women postpartum women (given birth in the last year) in Indiana were assessed on their knowledge of warning signs, level of informational support they received from their provider, and perceived stress. Descriptive and inferential analysis (ANOVA and regression analysis) were performed.

In phase two of the study we conducted a scoping literature review to identify key variables of spousal support and how the presence and/or absence of it contributes to postpartum depression. The review will identify work status, number of children, and income. Theme analysis will be conducted to identify key areas. The goal will be to add the new variables to the data collection for the second phase of the study at Wellstar Cobb Hospital in Georgia.

Results: This is an on-going study and data analysis will be taking place in April 2023. Descriptive and theme results will be presented.

Discussion: The current project will be discussed and the importance of understanding the impact of cognitive load on patients and support partners, how arousal and stress can impact discharge education, and innovate ways to reimagine the discharge process. Major themes from the literature review will also be presented.

Impact: The results will have implications for the education of mothers after childbirth and provide important evidence that can guide interventions to enhance and facilitate comprehension of discharge instructions.