



C-Gen 11

Perinatal Depression

Perinatal depression (PND) incorporates both antenatal and postnatal depression, and is a mood disorder which can impact significantly on women, families and the broader community.

All members of pregnancy care teams have the responsibility to identify clinical features during pregnancy that may predispose a pregnant woman to developing PND. These include; personal and family history of depression or anxiety states, social isolation, relationship difficulties and recent bereavement. Screening tools may be used to identify women at higher risk of PND.

Recognition of stressors and other risks for PND, both in the antenatal and postnatal period, should alert pregnancy carers to initiate a care plan that facilitates early recognition and treatment of PND. Poor communication, lack of continuity in antenatal care, and non-collaborative models of care should be avoided. Early discharge is associated with an increased risk of PND (A R Hickey, etal; MJA 1997).

It is important that there is timely and appropriate transfer of information between obstetricians and midwives involved in maternity care , with General Practitioners and other health care providers in order to maximise diagnostic opportunities.

GPs should be considered the cornerstone of management of PND because of their role in the continuity of holistic care of the patient and her family, their ability to interact in both private and public sectors, and their expertise in referral to further mental health care. All pregnancy carers should identify resources to enable them to maximise care for a woman affected by PND.

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Useful Links

1. *Therapeutic Goods Administration*. Prescribing medicines in pregnancy, 4th ed (1999). <http://www.tga.gov.au/docs/html/medpreg.htm>. Accessed 23 February 2007. This contains amendments to classification updates to prescribing medicines in pregnancy, see four documents below:

 February 2007 <http://www.tga.gov.au/docs/html/mip/0702newmed.pdf>
 June 2006 <http://www.tga.gov.au/docs/html/mip/0606newmed.pdf>

 June 2006 <http://www.tga.gov.au/docs/html/mip/0606catchang.pdf>

 February 2006 <http://www.tga.gov.au/docs/html/mip/0602catchang.pdf>
2. List of references pertaining to *Drugs in Human Milk*, developed by the King Edward Memorial Hospital <http://www.pharm.uwa.edu.au/drugs-milk/intro.html>. Accessed 23 February 2007

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