

Workstream 4.8

Towards understanding GPs' viewpoint on diagnosis postnatal depression in general practice: a realist evaluation

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Lay summary:

Postnatal depression is a mental health condition that affects approximately 10-15% of postnatal women. It is a complex problem because of the severe long-term impacts on a new mother's mood, the mother-baby relationship, and the baby's emotional and cognitive development. However, less than 50% of cases are identified in routine clinical assessment, making postnatal depression a challenging issue to support. GPs are often involved in regular postnatal check-ups placing them in a unique position to monitor mothers' wellbeing. They are the first point of contact for many mothers during pregnancy and postpartum fostering a longitudinal relationship with their patients. They are therefore in a good position to recognise postnatal depression and be able to triage severe cases to secondary care. Therefore, our realist evaluation explores the factors that influence the patient-doctor interactions during a consultation in order to gain an understanding of the prevalence of under-diagnosis in postnatal women. Understanding the GP's perspective may, in the long term, influence how guidance might be adapted to suit the different contexts which may arise during the screening of a new mother's wellbeing.