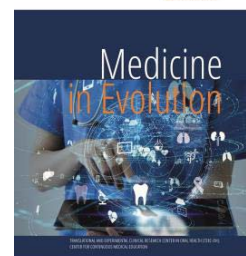


The role of nurses in the management of postpartum depression



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Abstract

This study has been carried out with the aim of investigating the level of knowledge of the nurses and their role in the management of post-partum depression. Participants were 73 professional nurses, and the data were collected through a questionnaire formed out of 16 questions.

73 nurses were interviewed, consider that they were not properly prepared for this role and they were not able to identify and manage the patients with post-partum depression. They also consider that the ideal training should contain more theoretical information. A part of the nurses (32, 87%) do not know the symptomatology, and 38,35% are not aware of the risk factors of post-partum depression.

Postpartum depression is seen in approximately 10% of women who have recently given birth, but also in 3, 3% of men. Despite of this numbers, the Romanian medical personnel is not yet well prepared in facing this affection.

Keywords: post-partum depression, nursing, management of post-partum depression

INTRODUCTION

Nurses specializing in maternal and child care are poised to play a pivotal role in the early identification and prompt treatment of perinatal depression [1-4].

Postpartum period it is well-known for presenting high-risk for the appearance of a mental illness. Recent studies shows that in 13% of women occurs during the first year of postpartum period, and 20% in the first trimester. Their depression can, in some cases, also adversely affect their infants; given the potential serious consequences of postpartum depression, it is imperative that health professionals caring for mothers of infants appropriately manage this disorder [5-7].

Aim and objectives

The present study is observational and aims to analyze the level of knowledge of nurses and their role in the management of patients with postpartum depression.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The assessment instrument is a questionnaire which contains 16 questions about postpartum depression and the management of it. The questionnaire is structured on three parts: general information about the participants, the nurse's knowledge about the postpartum depression, and the identification and the management of the patient's cases. For this, we choose a sample made out of 73 participants.

RESULTS

Participants in this study were asked if they consider that more theoretic information is needed, in order to be able to identify and help women with postpartum depression. Of the 73 nurses, 53 answered yes, and the other 17 consider that they do know enough.



Figure 1. Insufficient training

Of the nurses in our study, 43 know the symptomatology and also the risk factors and 22 are not in knowledge of none.

Table 1. Contingency table between symptomatology and risk factors

	Cunosc factorii de risc	Nu cunosc factorii de risc
Cunosc simptomatologia	43	6
Nu cunosc simptomatologia	2	22

37 nurses declared that they can easily identify a patient with post-partum depression.

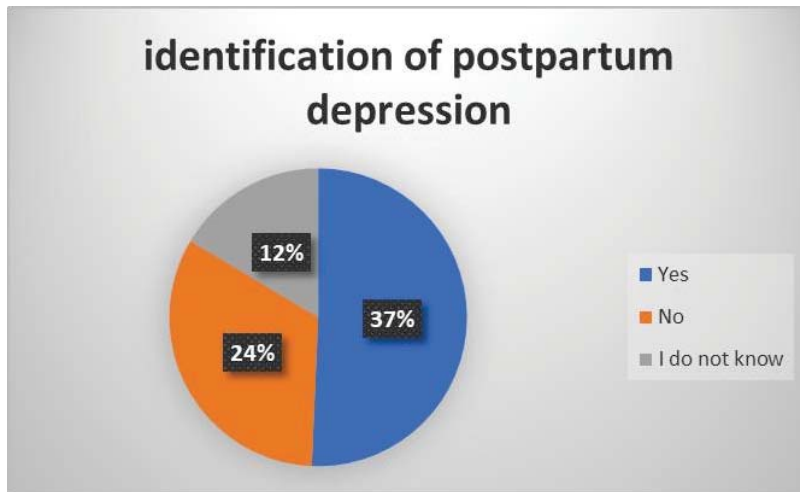


Figure 2. Identification of postpartum depression

The results also indicate that the nurse experience is very important.

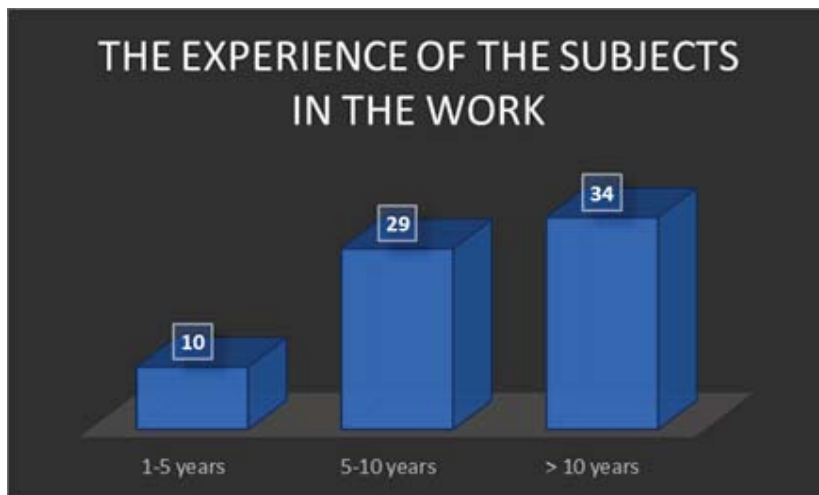


Figure 3. The experience of the subjects in the work

However there are many different methods of screening; the participants were asked what measures do they take when facing a patient with postpartum depression; 27 reply that they apply their own methods of counseling, 43 said that they announce a medic and other 3 do not consider, depression a severe illness.

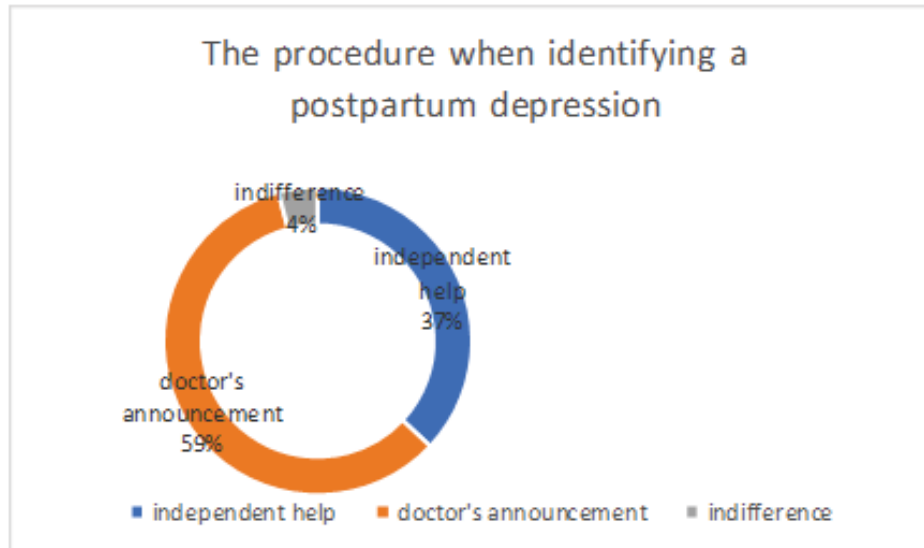


Figure 4. The procedure when identifying a postpartum depression

DISCUSSIONS

Some possible important directions for future studies would be:

- a more detailed study program of postpartum depression, both in post-secondary schools and in university studies, focusing on screening methods, symptoms, risk factors and the consequences of this condition
- conducting prenatal classes for both parents
- nationwide screening of postpartum depression, performed by average medical staff, through home visits immediately after birth, follow-up visits.
- campaigns to raise awareness of postpartum depression as a public health problem, through television commercials and making posters and flyers.
- family involvement of people at high risk for postpartum depression.

CONCLUSIONS

Postpartum depression is seen in approximately 10% of women who have recently given birth, but also in 3, 3% of men. Despite of this numbers, the Romanian medical personnel is not yet well prepared in facing this illness. For a good management of postpartum depression, there has to be a collaboration between the medical staff and nurses.

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