When the Patient is Not Your Patient: Maternal Mental Health in the Pediatric Context

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A Tale of Two Pediatricians
Why Should You Care?

(As a Clinician. We assume you care as a Human Being.)
Untreated Mood/Anxiety Disorder: Pregnancy

Mother
• Poor/Absent Prenatal Care
• Self-medication
  • 10-12% smoke tobacco
  • 14-15% use alcohol
  • 3% use illicit drugs
• Bonding with baby
• Impact on family

Fetus
• Pre-term labor
• Premature birth (<37 wks)
• Low birth weight
• Small for G.A., head circumference
• Increased cortisol
• Low APGAR scores
• Neonatal complications & NICU admissions
• Fetal demise
Untreated Mood/Anxiety Disorder: Postpartum

**Mother**
- Breastfeeding problems/cessation
- Responsivity, sensitivity
- Inconsistency
- Emotion regulation
- Substance abuse

**Child**
- Withdrawal, avoidance in toddlers
- Significantly worse:
  - school outcomes
  - reading achievement
  - grades
  - cognitive functioning
- Significantly more behavior problems
- ~50% of adolescents have a psychiatric disorder
- ~2x the rate of physical problems
How to Talk to a Mom
"...be sure to sterilize nipple before feeding baby."
How to Talk to a Mom

How are you feeling about being a new mother?
How are you coping with the additional stress of a new baby?
Are you able to sleep (at night) when the baby is sleeping?
How is your appetite? Do you have an appetite?
Do you have enough energy to do the things you need to do?
Have you been feeling sad, down or depressed?
Have you been feeling anxious, worried or afraid?
Do you find yourself crying a lot/all the time?
Have you had any thoughts that have scared you?
How Might Mom Talk (or Look, or Act) To You?
If she has...

Depression

• **Look**
  - Disheveled/unkempt
  - Physically ill/unwell
  - Shell-shocked

• **Talk**
  - Not a lot
  - Negative cast to everything
  - Describe baby differently from what you see

• **Act**
  - Poor eye contact (with you and/or baby)
  - Flat
  - Irritated/angry with you, partner, baby
If she has...

Anxiety

• **Look**
  - Taught, tense (neck muscles)
  - Jittery, up & down, can’t sit still
  - “Deer in the headlights”

• **Talk**
  - A lot
  - Incessant questions, same themes
  - Can’t let you leave the room
  - About thoughts/visions of hurting the baby

• **Act**
  - High-strung
  - Many calls to practice
  - Like she doesn’t see the same baby
If she has...

**Bipolar Disorder**

- **Look**
  - Different (if you already know her)
  - “Wild-eyed”
  - Euphoric, huge smile

- **Talk**
  - Incessantly (you cannot speak)
  - Nonsensically (you cannot follow)

- **Act**
  - Full of energy, plans and projects
  - Not focused on baby, but not disengaged
If she has...

Psychosis

- **Look**
  - Disheveled, “feral”

- **Talk**
  - Nonsensically
  - Not at all (catatonia)

- **Act**
  - Agitated, bizarre
  - Totally flat
  - Relentless
Resources & Referrals

A.K.A.: What on earth can I do with this mom??!
The Path to Wellness

- Changes at home:
  - Sleep
  - Nutrition
  - Help & Support
  - Time Alone

- Home Visiting
- Social Support Groups
- Psychotherapy
- Medication

Easier & Cheaper

More Involved
More Expensive
Resources & Referrals

Postpartum Support International

www.postpartum.net

“one-stop shopping”

Washington, DC


Maryland


Virginia

Resources & Referrals

Postpartum Support International

www.postpartum.net

Warmline (English & Spanish):

• 800-944-4773

Online Support Groups (English & Spanish):

• Live, participants register – i.e. not forums
• Hosted through www.supportgroupscentral.com

Telephone “Chats”

• Moms – Every Wednesday, times vary
• Dads – First Monday of the month, 8:00pm Eastern
Resources & Referrals

DC Collaborative for Mental Health in Pediatric Primary Care

- Child & Adolescent Mental Health Resource Guide
  - Perinatal Mental Health section
- Home Visiting section
- Also includes link to DMV-PMH Resource Guide
Resources & Referrals

DC Collaborative for Mental Health in Pediatric Primary Care

• **Perinatal Mental Health Toolkit (V1.0)**
  • Overview of Toolkit
  • Summary of PMADs: Symptoms, Risk Factors, Incidence, Treatment
  • EPDS in English & Spanish
  • Referral Algorithm & Crisis Plan
  • Key Clinical Considerations: OCD v. Psychosis, Medicating
  • Resource Guide mentioned above

Resources & Referrals

DC Collaborative for Mental Health in Pediatric Primary Care

DC-MAP

- MH consult service via telephone
- Psychiatrists, social workers, psychologists, and a care coordinator
- For pediatric patients and their caregivers

http://www.dcmap.org/
1-844-30 DC MAP
1-844-303-2627
Hours: M-F, 9-5pm
Questions?

🙏 Thank You!

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