



Post Natal Depression Screening in the Emergency Department Guideline



Post Natal Depression (PND) affects approximately 10% of women during pregnancy or after childbirth. Untreated, PND is associated with several adverse effects including; impaired mother-child bonding, suicide and infanticide, reduced breastfeeding rates, reduced compliance with vaccination schedules and may be associated with cognitive and developmental issues in the child.

Key Points:

A Screening programme with access to appropriate support services can prevent or reduce the severity of PND.

There should be a low threshold to use the Edinburgh Post Natal Depression Scale (EDPS).

Screen all women with infants < 6 months with the 2 screening questions:

- During the past month, have you often been bothered by feeling down, depressed or hopeless?
- During the past month, have you often been bothered by having little interest or pleasure in doing things?

Women are at higher risk of PND if there is a past history of mental health issues or if there are significant social stressors

Often babies of mothers where there is concern for severe PND or significant social stressors will be admitted under the general paediatrics team for observation and further support.

The CUH Children's Emergency Department and the CUMH Perinatal Mental Health Service are collaborating on a CREC approved quality improvement project to determine whether women within 6 months post partum would benefit from a screening programme for PND in the ED.

Using the Edinburgh Post Natal Depression Scale (EDPS):

This is an extensively validated, 10 item, self-reported questionnaire.

Responses are scored from 0-3 with a maximum score of 30. The form is to be completed by the mother.

Note: A score of 1 or more for question 10 (self-harm) should prompt a referral to liaison psychiatry in CUH prior to patient discharge.



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When to use:

Use whenever there is concern for possible PND. The following can be used as a guide.

- 1) Positive response to preliminary screening questions
 - **Feeling down?:** During the past month, have you often been bothered by feeling down, depressed or hopeless?
 - **Loss of pleasure?:** During the past month, have you often been bothered by having little interest or pleasure in doing things?

OR

- 2) Past history of depression or another mental health disorder

OR

- 3) Clinical concern based on observations in the ED: Some indicators for using the EDPS might include the following examples;
 - An unusual level of anxiety about the health of the infant
 - Concern over one's ability to look after their infant
 - Negative perception of infant temperament and behaviour
 - Lack of interest in infant's activities
 - Non-adherence to post-natal care
 - Frequent visits to the ED or GP



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