



Postnatal Support to New Mothers

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Introduction:

Social support to new mothers is vital during their transition to parenthood. While this is highlighted in the literature with great emphasis on the support particularly from spouse, it is doubted how the level of support from family members compared among various socio-demographic groups?

Objectives:

1. To examine the relationship between postnatal support, stress, and depression among primipara; and
2. To investigate the difference of actual support received by the first time mothers from different socio-demographic background.

Study Design:

Quantitative approach was adopted using validated questionnaires on depression, social support and stress.

Sample and Procedure:

192 first time mothers were recruited at their third trimester from 5 hospitals to participate before and after delivery. At the third trimester, participants were recruited from antenatal clinics and completed a set of self-report questionnaire after signing the consent. The questionnaire was sent by post to participants at 6 weeks after delivery.

Results:

Postnatal family support was negatively and significantly correlated with perceived stress, childcare stress and depression. Among spouse, maternal parents and parents-in-law, the support from spouse and maternal parents were also negatively and significantly correlated with stress and depression but no significant association with support from parents-in-law. The depressed group received significantly less support from spouse. Those lived with in-laws reported significantly higher support from both in-laws and spouse compared to those not living with in-laws. Those lived with parents reported significantly higher overall postnatal support and informational support. The younger age also group received significantly higher support from in-laws.

Conclusion:

The findings are very useful in getting family involvement to support the new mothers. More practical advice can be given to family members to provide appropriate support.