Reality Check in Postpartum Depression: What Is Driving Suboptimal Management?

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BACKGROUND

This study assessed physicians' practice patterns in diagnosis, current management, and knowledge of emerging treatments for postpartum depression (PPD).

METHODS

- Psychiatrists (n=1024)
- Obstetricians & Gynecologists (ob/gyns) (n=188)
- Primary Care Physicians (PCPs) (n=193)

A 27-question clinical practice assessment survey was made available to psychiatrists, ob/gyns and PCPs. Questions evaluated knowledge, competence, and barriers related to PPD.

RESULTS

FIGURE 1

10% or less of all the specialists reported being very confident in treating patients with PPD

Self-efficacy, Question 4: How confident are you about treating patients who have PPD? (Select ranking from 1 [Not confident] to 5 [Very confident])

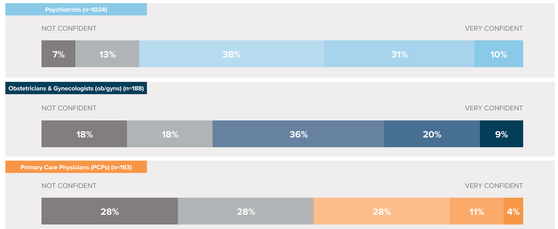


FIGURE 2

Definition of PPD: 46% of psychiatrists, 35% of ob/gyns, and 36% of PCPs were aware of the definition of PPD as per the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (Fifth Edition) (DSM-5)

Question 9: Per the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (Fifth Edition) (DSM-5), which of the following statements best defines PPD?

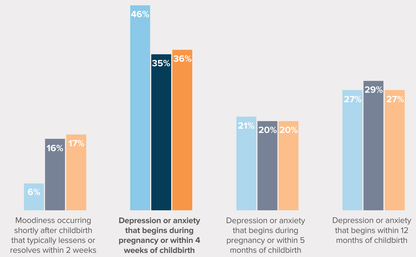


FIGURE 3

Pathophysiology of PPD: 50% of psychiatrists, 43% of ob/gyns, and 46% of PCPs were aware of the role of allopregnanolone in the development of PPD

Question 24: Allopregnanolone is a predominant metabolite of progesterone. What hypothesis has been put forth regarding allogrenanolone's role in the development of PPD?

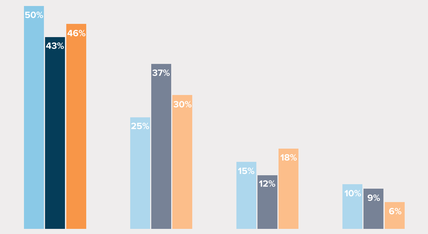


FIGURE 4

Risk factors for PPD: 51% of psychiatrists, 59% of ob/gyns, and 45% of PCPs were aware of the most common risk factors for PPD

Question 12: Which of the following risk factors is most strongly associated with depression in both the antenatal and postnatal period?

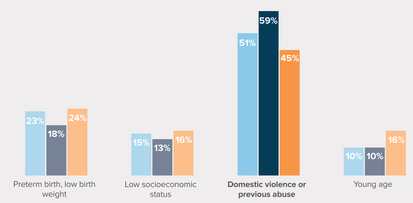


FIGURE 5

Screening practices: 46% of psychiatrists, 31% of ob/gyns, and 30% of PCPs ask clinical questions and do not use validated tools/scales (question 5F), and 7% of psychiatrists, 10% of ob/gyns, and 17% of PCPs do not screen for PPD at all (question 5G). However, 80% of providers, on average, were aware of appropriate timepoints to screen for PPD. (question 14, average of all 3 specialties)

Question 5: How do you screen your patients for PPD? (Select all choices that you use regularly.)

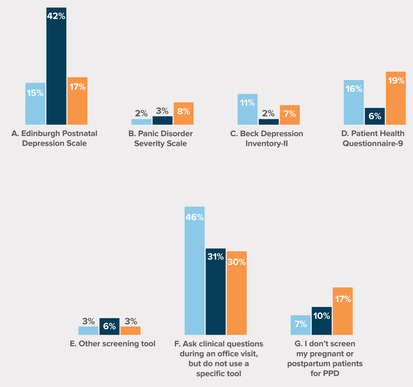


FIGURE 6

Current management of PPD: 88% of psychiatrists, 57% of ob/gyns, and 68% of PCPs were able to tailor appropriate treatments for PPD in case-based scenarios

Question 22: Emily is 24-year-old woman who recently became pregnant with her first child. She has a history of untreated depression. She was physically and sexually abused as a child. She has little social support and left her boyfriend after an argument. At her initial prenatal appointment, she expresses feelings of hopelessness. She is working 2 minimum-wage jobs to make ends meet and appears exhausted. Assessments indicate severe depression, and although referrals were made for psychosocial/psychological interventions, she has followed through because of her demanding work schedule. At Emily's next appointment, she reveals having suicidal thoughts. Given the severity of her depression and inability to follow through with psychosocial/psychological interventions, she agrees to pharmacotherapy. Which of the following is the most appropriate option?

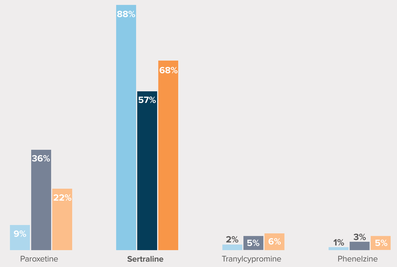
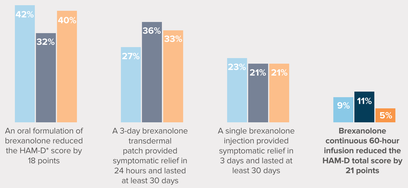


FIGURE 7

Awareness on emerging treatments for PPD: 9% of psychiatrists, 11% of ob/gyns, and 5% of PCPs were aware of the clinical data on emerging treatments for PPD

Question 25: Which of the following results were demonstrated in a phase 2 trial of investigational brexanolone?



HAM-D = Hamilton Depression Rating Scale

CONCLUSION

This educational research yielded important insights into clinical practice gaps in PPD, indicating that multiple specialists who encounter women of childbearing age and women who are pregnant would benefit from continuing medical education to better screen and manage PPD.

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For more informaiton please contact Jovana Lubarda, *jlubarda@medscape.net*

REFERENCE

Meltzer-Brody S. Managing Postpartum Depression: Do You Give Your Patients the Due Diligence? March 27, 2018. Available at: https://www.medscape.org/viewarticle/892131. Accessed September 24, 2018.

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