

Emotional Reactions to Racism and Postpartum Depression: Results from Michigan PRAMS, 2009-2010

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Background

- Depression is the leading cause of non-obstetric hospitalization in the United States.¹
- Maternal depression can lead to negative consequences for

Mother

- Maladaptive cognition, behaviors, and affect
- Decreased quality of life

Child

- High levels of negative affect and reactivity
- Disorganized attachment
- Increased externalizing behaviors²

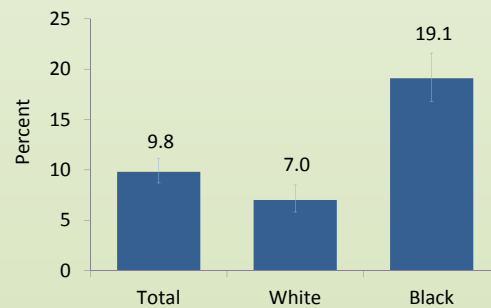
Methods

- Michigan PRAMS (Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System) surveys around 1% of resident mothers who deliver a live birth in Michigan annually.
- Around 65% of mothers respond: their answers are weighted to reflect the whole population of resident, occurant births each year.
- In 2009 and 2010, 1,645 non-Hispanic White and 1,224 non-Hispanic Black moms responded, for a combined sample size of 2,869.
- Descriptive frequencies for emotional reactions and postpartum depression were calculated.
- SUDAAN version 10.0.1 was used to calculate prevalence ratios for Black and White moms separately.

Emotional Reactions to Racism

- Defined as 'Yes' response to the question: *During the 12 months before your new baby was born, did you feel emotionally upset (for example, angry, sad, or frustrated) as a result of how you were treated based on your race?*

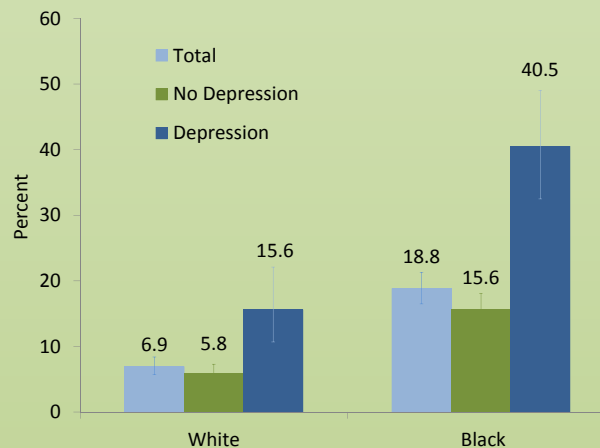
Figure 1. Prevalence of Postpartum Depression by Race



Postpartum Depression

- Defined as a score of eight or higher on index: *...how often you have felt or experienced things this way since your new baby was born. Use the scale when answering:*
- | Scale | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|-----------|---|---|---|---|---|
| Never | | | | | |
| Rarely | | | | | |
| Sometimes | | | | | |
| Often | | | | | |
| Always | | | | | |
- a. I felt down, depressed, or sad.
- b. I felt hopeless.
- c. I felt slowed down.

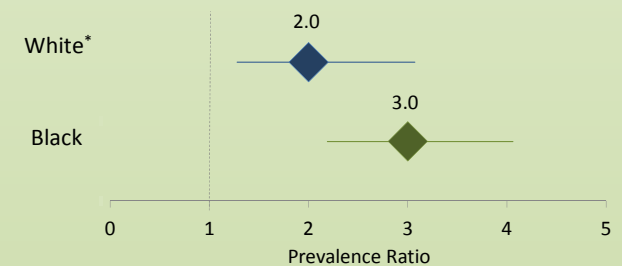
Figure 2. Emotional Reactions to Racism by Race and Postpartum Depression



Results

- A higher percentage of Black mothers (19%) suffered from postpartum depression than White moms (7%, Figure 1).
- Over 40% of Black moms and 16% of White moms with postpartum depression also experienced emotional reactions to racism (Figure 2).
- Black moms facing emotional reactions to racism were three times more likely to develop postpartum depression than black moms who didn't vs. only a twofold increase among White moms (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Relationships between Reactions to Racism and Depression



*Adjusted for pregnancy intention and marital status

Conclusions

- Information about experiences with emotional reactions to racism may be useful for identifying women at high risk for developing postpartum depression.
- Findings support the potential utility of developing and validating racism related questions for the purpose of postpartum depression risk assessment.

References

1. Jiang HJ, Elixhauser A, Nicholas J, et al. Care of Women in U.S. Hospitals, 2000. Rockville (MD): AHRQ; 2002. HCUP Fact Book No. 3; AHRQ Publication No. 02-0044.
2. O'hara M. Postpartum Depression: What We Know. *J Clin Psychol* 2009. 65(12), 1258-69.