Psychosocial factors of antenatal anxiety and depression in Pakistan: Is social support a mediator?

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PRESENTATION FORMAT: Oral Presentation

TOPIC/TARGET AUDIENCE: Family physicians, public health professionals, general community, trans-cultural psychiatrists, psychologists

ABSTRACT:
Introduction: Pregnancy is generally viewed as a time of fulfillment and joy; however, for many women it can be a stressful event. In South Asia it is associated with cultural stigmas revolving around gender discrimination, abnormal births and genetic abnormalities.

Methodology: This cross-sectional study was done at four teaching hospitals in Lahore from February, 2014 to June, 2014. A total of 500 pregnant women seen at hospital obstetrics and gynecology departments were interviewed with a questionnaire consisting of three sections: demographics, the Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS) and the Social Provisions Scale (SPS). All data were analyzed in SPSS v.20.

Results: A high percentage of respondents reported severe level of anxiety (245, 49%) and depression (159, 31.8%). Social support (SPS score) mediated the relationship between the total number of children, gender of previous children and HADS score. Women with more daughters were significantly more likely to score higher on the HADS and lower on the SPS, whereas higher numbers of sons were associated with the opposite trends in the scores ($P < .05$).

Conclusion: Because of the predominantly patriarchal socio-cultural context in Pakistan, the predictors of antenatal anxiety and depression may differ from those in developed countries.

OBJECTIVE(S): To delineate the predictors of antenatal anxiety, depression and social support among pregnant women of Pakistan.

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