

P01-255 - MATERNAL POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION IN ASSOCIATION WITH AUTISTIC TRAITS IN THE OFFSPRING

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Objectives: Postpartum depression is a common but yet under diagnosed condition that affects new mothers but has also been linked to psycho-emotional and developmental difficulties in the offspring. Autistic disorder is a severe developmental disorder that has a much better prognosis when diagnosed early. The aim of this study was to examine the possible association between maternal postpartum depression and the presence of autistic traits in the offspring.

Methods: We undertook a longitudinal study in Athens, Greece, following a cohort of 291 women with questionnaires for 24 months after delivery. The women filled out the Edinburg Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS) at six and twelve months postpartum and the Modified Checklist for Autism in Toddlers (M-CHAT) at around 18 months after delivery. Both questionnaires are used as screening tools, using a cut-off of 12/30 for the EPDS and 3/23 for the M-CHAT.

Results: 95 women who had filled out both the EPDS at 12 months postpartum as well as the M-CHAT were included in the analyses. Self-reported postpartum depression in the mother at 12 months postpartum was strongly associated with the presence of autistic traits in the offspring at 18 months of age (OR= 5.24, 95% CIs 1.15-23.79).

Conclusions: Maternal postpartum depression was found to be associated with the presence of autistic traits in the offspring at 18 months of age. These findings stress the need for early identification of postpartum depression cases and careful follow up of both mother and offspring.