

P02-502

POSTPARTAL PSYCHOSIS: SERBIAN EXPERIENCE

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Introduction: Childbirth and the postpartal period present a form of specific maturational crisis and an extremely vulnerable period for every woman, especially for those who have potential for some psychological disturbances.

Aim: We explored sociodemographic and clinical manifestations of women in the postpartal period who were hospitalized at the Institute of Psychiatry, Clinical Center of Serbia.

Method: This retrospective study included 60 patients with psychiatric disorders developed within six months after childbirth. Inclusion criteria were: negative psychiatric history, negative history of puerperal episode, and postpartal disorder as a first manifestation of psychiatric disturbances. Patients were diagnosed according to RDC criteria (research diagnostic criteria).

Results: Patients with psychotic features were predominant, average age 23.6; married; mothers of male offspring and with positive family history of psychiatric disorders in 30%. Subacute development of clinical manifestations was noticed, 3.5 weeks after childbirth on average. No psychopathology was observed before third postpartal day. Obstetric manifestations did not influence psychopathology.

Conclusion: Childbirth is a significant risk factor for the expression of mental dysfunction in the puerperal period. The most vulnerable group is women with clinical expression of dysfunction, specific sociodemographic characteristics, and positive family history of psychiatric disorders.