

THE CORRELATES OF POSITIVE AFFECT IN PREGNANCY AND POSTPARTUM

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Introduction: Positive affect (PA) is correlated to several positive outcomes and might be a constituent of happiness (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005).

Objectives: To investigate the correlates of PA in pregnancy and postpartum.

Methods: 397 pregnant women (T0) were also followed at 3 months postpartum (T1). At both time-points, they completed a questionnaire, the Postpartum Depression Screening Scale (PDSS), the Profile of Mood States (POMS), and were also interviewed with some sections of the Diagnostic Interview for Genetic studies (DIGS). Descriptive and correlation analyses were performed.

Results: T0/T1 PA scores were correlated ($p < .01$). T0 PA was associated with fewer children, and T1 PA with a concurrent better self-reported health ($p < .05$). PA at T0/T1 was associated with nulliparity ($p < .05/p < .01$), mother's age (younger) ($p < .05/p < .01$). PA at T0/T1 was associated with lower levels of perceived life stress ($p < .01$); better life quality ($p < .01$); more social support ($p < .01$); lower levels of anxiety trait, depressive/anxious emotional states ($p < .01$), depressive symptoms ($p < .01$), and suicide ideation ($p < .01$); less self-reported maternal sleep difficulties and lower interference of it on their mood and working functioning. Moreover, PA assessed at pregnancy was associated with these variables at postpartum. PA at T1 was associated with a better perception of the infant as having less feeding/sleeping/and behavior problems.

Conclusions: PA is a protective emotional trait, a good indicator of physical/mental health, and well-being in perinatal period. Mother's PA influences her perception of the infant temperament and may contribute positively to the dyadic interaction.