

Risk factors in mental health of pregnant and postpartum mothers during the COVID-19 pandemic

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Abstract

During the Covid-19 pandemic, as part of their measures to mitigate the spread of the virus, many countries adopted social distancing and confinement measures, which impacted the well-being and mental health of the population, particularly women and young people. Symptoms of depression, anxiety, and stress are common during the perinatal period, and in Chile, these disorders affect a significant percentage of women, especially those of lower socioeconomic status. This article seeks to showcase the variables that predict symptoms of anxiety, depression, and stress, as well as those that predict perceived social support in pregnant and postpartum mothers of low socioeconomic status in the pandemic context. A quasi-experimental, cross-sectional, and quantitative study was carried out in which depressive symptoms, stress and anxiety, as well as perceived social support, were evaluated in 94 pregnant women and 181 postpartum women. The outcome shows that a negative and significant correlation between symptoms of depression, anxiety, and stress and perceived social support. As a predictive factor for poorer mental health and less perceived social support in pregnant and postpartum women, age, migrant status, educational level, number of children, and co-responsibility in housework are considered. The implications of these results regarding the importance of receiving psychosocial support during the perinatal period, as well as public policies that tackle this reality are discussed.

Keywords mothers, depressive symptomatology, anxiety, stress, social support, pandemic