

Trauma and traumatic stress in a sample of pregnant women

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Highlights

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We found a high prevalence of traumatic events among pregnant Peruvian women.

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Our results affirm the utility of trauma events questionnaire among pregnant women.

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There is an urgent need for trauma informed care in antenatal settings.

Abstract

Objective

To examine the construct validity of the 9 item Traumatic Events Questionnaire (TEQ) and to evaluate the extent to which experiences of **trauma** assessed using the TEQ are associated with symptoms of **psychiatric disorders** among 3342 pregnant women in Lima, Peru.

Methods

Symptoms of **depression** were assessed using the Patient Health Questionnaire-9 (PHQ-9) and **Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale** (EPDS) while

the PTSD Checklist-civilian (PCL-C) and Generalized Anxiety Disorder-7 (GAD-7) were used to assess symptoms of PTSD and generalized anxiety. Hierarchical logistic regression procedures were used to evaluate relations between TEQ and symptoms of psychiatric disorders.

Results

The majority of participants (87.8%) experienced at least one traumatic event (mean = 2.5 events). The trauma occurrence score was moderately correlated with symptoms of PTSD (PCL-C: $\rho = 0.38$, P -value < 0.0001), depression (EPDS: $\rho = 0.31$, P -value < 0.0001; PHQ-9: $\rho = 0.20$, P -value < 0.0001), and GAD (GAD-7: $\rho = 0.29$, P -value < 0.0001). Stronger correlations were observed between the trauma intensity score with symptoms of psychiatric disorders (PCL-C: $\rho = 0.49$, P -value < 0.0001; EPDS: $\rho = 0.36$, P -value < 0.0001; PHQ-9: $\rho = 0.31$, P -value < 0.0001; GAD-7: $\rho = 0.39$, P -value < 0.0001).

Conclusion

Given the high burden of trauma experiences and the enduring adverse consequences on maternal and child health, there is an urgent need for integrating evidence-based trauma informed care programs in obstetrical practices serving Peruvian patients.