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Peripartum administration of esketamine: a way to prevent postpartum depression?

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Introduction: Postpartum depression (PPD) is one of the most prevalent mental disorders, with the potential to precipitate complications in childbearing. The estimated prevalence of PPD ranges from 7% to 13% in developed countries and exceeds 20% in underdeveloped countries. Near 20% of women presenting with symptoms of PPD experience suicidal ideation. Prompt detection and management of this patient group is of particular importance. The use of esketamine has shown to reduce the incidence of PPD in previous studies, but its widespread use has been hampered by its side effects and the need for hospitalisation.

Objectives: We aimed to review the available literature on the efficacy and safety of peripartum esketamine use.

Methods: A narrative literature review was carried out in the PubMed, Cochrane and Embase databases, selecting only the articles published in the last 10 years, using the following keywords: pregnancy, esketamine, postpartum depression.

Results: After childbirth 6 weeks is a high-risk period for PPD, specially the first week. The incidence of PPD is higher in C/S than in normal births. Compared with pregnant women who underwent C/S without the use of esketamine, those who used esketamine in the perioperative period had a 48% reduced risk of developing postpartum depression and a 1.43 point reduction in the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS). The optimal dose of esketamine for PPD is unknown; most studies consider high doses above 0.5 mg/kg and low doses inferior. These favourable effects were observed at both short and long-term follow-up and in low and high doses. Compared to intranasal esketamine, intravenous esketamine has a higher bioavailability and is more convenient to dose control. Route of administration and dose of esketamine did not affect the prophylactic effect of esketamine on PPD, but they differ in their adverse effect profiles. The incidence of immediate adverse reactions to intraoperative pumped esketamine is extremely high, particularly during the intraoperative period when more patients receiving esketamine developed neurological or psychiatric symptoms (97.7%). Other common immediate intraoperative maternal adverse events were nausea and vomiting, dizziness and hallucinations, but had no significant effect on postoperative adverse. Adverse reactions to esketamine are usually transient and are more common when single intravenous injection is used (continuous infusion is preferable), with faster and higher doses.

Conclusions: PPD has potentially serious consequences for mothers and their children, and there is an urgent need for safe, effective and accessible treatments. As the use of esketamine has progressed, concerns have arisen about adverse effects, particularly long-term efficacy, addiction and suicide risk. Current evidence suggests that although it may have a good preventive effect, a long research trail is needed to prove and confirm the efficacy and safety of esketamine.

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Mothers of infants and toddlers: basic markers of psychological well-being and their correlation with optimism

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Introduction: Psychological well-being of women during the first years of their maternity is essential for both them and their families. However in the same time mothers of infants and toddlers face a lot of challenges in fulfilling their role so their well-being should be closely monitored.

Objectives: The research aimed to study the basic markers of the psychological well-being of mothers with little children, such as depressive tendencies, anxiety, optimism and aggression.

Methods: To measure depressive tendencies the Beck Depression Inventory (as adapted by N.V. Tarabrina) was used. Anxiety levels were assessed using the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory by C. Spielberger (as adapted by Yu.L. Khanin). Life Orientation Test (as adapted by T.O. Gordeeva *et al*) was used to assess respondents' optimism levels and Bass-Perry Aggression Questionnaire was used to assess the aggression factors (as adapted by S.N. Enikolopov and Tsybul'skii N.P.). Spearman's rank correlation coefficient was used for data analysis. The research was conducted from September 2023 to August 2024. The sample consisted of 253 mothers and 31 fathers (as the control group) with children of three years old and less.

Results: Our sample demonstrated comparably high levels of anxiety and average levels the aggression factors and optimism for women as set out in the table below (mean scores shown) (table 1). Table 1. Comparative analysis of psychological well-being in women and men.

	State anxiety	Trait anxiety	Anger	Hostility	Physical aggression	Optimism
Women	48± 24.53%	49± 23.48%	20± 26.97%	21± 31.53%	20± 32.22%	17± 32.70%
Men	41± 30.58%	42± 27.12%	17± 26.97%	19± 31.53%	22± 32.22%	17± 32.70%

Results of 73 women (29%) show expressive depressive tendencies and results of 67 women (27%) show severe depression tendencies (using the cut-off points proposed by Andriushchenko A.V. and his colleagues (Andriushchenko *et al*. Zh Nev rol Psikhiatr Im S S Korsakova 2003; 103(5) 11–18), being 12 points for the expressed depressive tendencies and 20 points for the severe depressive tendencies). Only results of 2 men from the control group (7%) show expressive depressive tendencies and results of 3 men (10%) show severe depression tendencies. Negative correlations of the optimism levels of mothers to the depressive tendencies ($r=-0.342$, $p=0.003$) and hostility ($r=-0.259$, $p=0.027$) levels were discovered.

Conclusions: Thus, the results of our study indicate that the depression and anxiety levels of mothers of infants and toddlers are comparably high, while the aggression and optimism indicators stay on average levels. The study also shows negative correlations of the optimism level of mothers with the depression tendencies and the hostility level.

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