

Postpartum Mental Health in Mainland China: A Call for Action

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Postpartum Depression

- Subset of Major Depressive Disorder
 - Onset 4 weeks after childbirth
- Consequences of PPD
 - A risk to family, maternal, and child health
- Risk factors of PPD
 - History of previous depression
 - Low social support
 - Life stress

Cross-cultural Explorations of PPD

- Wide variation in PPD prevalence rates
 - 10% - 15% in the U.S.
 - 0% - 40% worldwide
- Cultural variations
 - Definitions
 - Diagnostic standards
 - Manifestations of PPD
- Sociopolitical, historical and cultural contexts
- Traditional postpartum practices

Postpartum Practice in China

- *Zuoyuezi*, or “Doing the month”
 - Culturally mandated bed rest
 - One-month confinement period
 - Care by mother or mother-in-law
- Adherence to strict guidelines
 - Restore balance in the body/spirit (*ying-yang*)
 - Foods according to hot/cold theory
 - Observe cultural taboos

坐
月
子

Prior Studies in Chinese Populations

- Protective effect of *zuoyuezi* on PPD
 - Found in Chinese populations in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and immigrant populations.
- Taiwan
 - Better health status
 - Reduced stress levels
 - Live in parents' home
 - Receive care from own mothers
- Hong Kong
 - Better social support
 - Lower risk of PPD
 - Conflict with mother-in-law*

Study Objectives

- Conduct pilot study of PPD in China
- Determine the prevalence of PPD in China
- Identify correlates of PPD in China

Study Design & Location

- Cross-sectional design
- Beijing, China
- Peking University Health Science Center
 - Peking University First Hospital
 - Women & Children's Hospital
 - Obstetrics outpatient clinic



Study Group

- Inclusion criteria
 - May 19, 2006 – July 21, 2006
 - Present at general obstetric outpatient clinic
 - During expected 6-8 week postpartum visit
 - 18 years of age or older
- Exclusion criteria
 - Serious health complications

Self-Administered Questionnaire

- Demographic characteristics
- History of mental health issues
- Factors in postpartum practice *zuoyuezi*

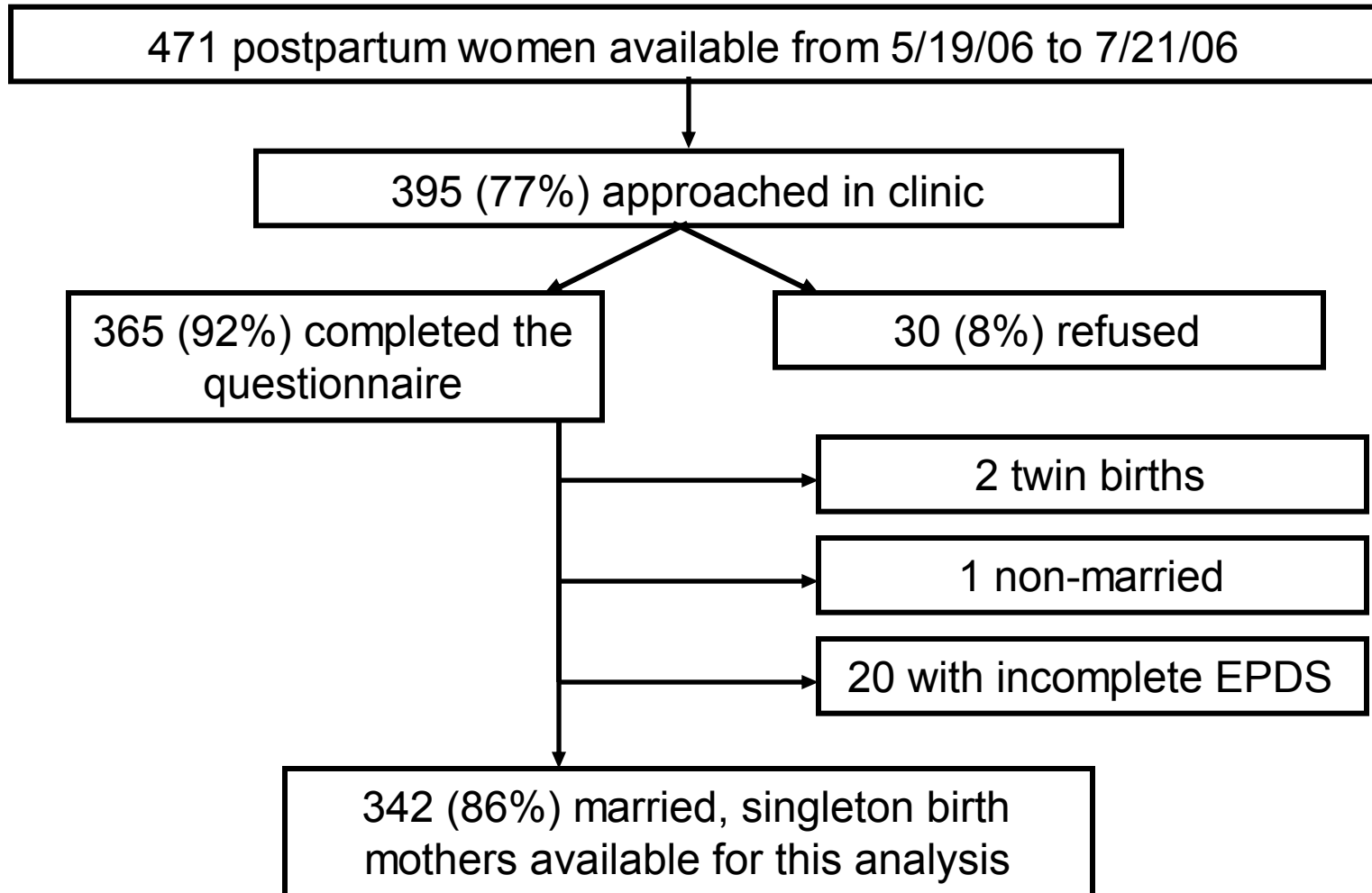
Screening for PPD

- Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS)
 - Ten question screen
 - Widely validated in many languages
 - Possible range of scores: 0 to 30
- Cut-off score for PPD symptoms
 - Original English version: ≥ 13
 - Chinese Mandarin version
 - Hong Kong, official: ≥ 10
 - Taiwan version: ≥ 13

Statistical Methods

- Categorical demographic and postpartum support factors
 - Odds ratio and chi-square tests
 - Logistic regression
- SAS (v9.1, Cary, NC)

Resultant Study Group



Results

- Basic demographics of study group
- PPD outcome
- Comparison between PPD and non-PPD
 - History of mental health issues
 - Postpartum practice *zuoyuezi*

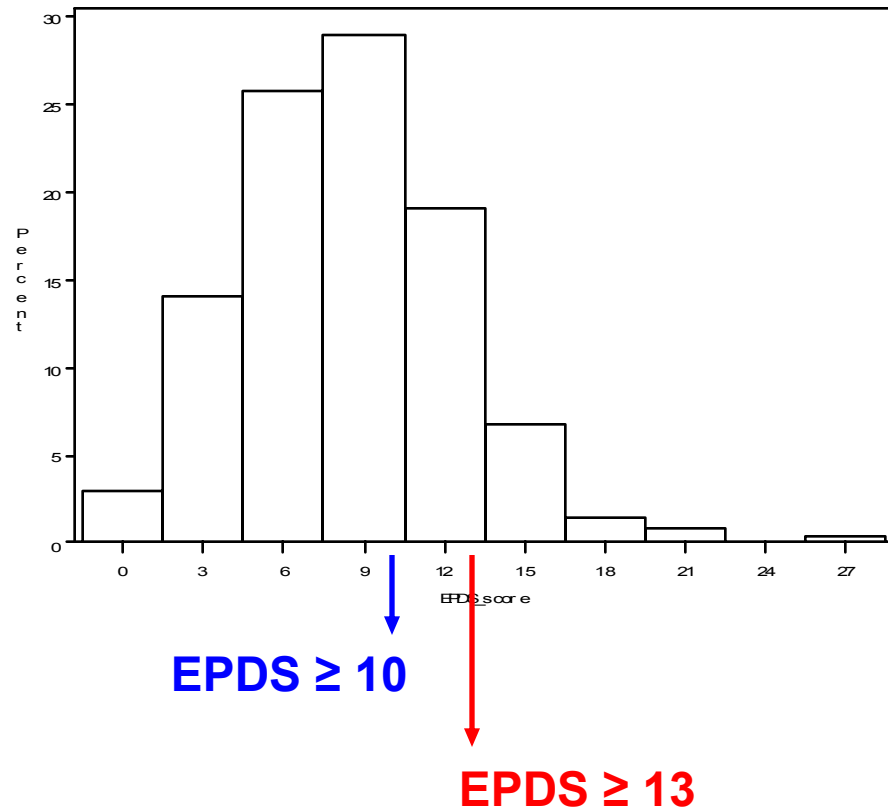
Demographic Characteristics

- All married, singleton births
- Age: 24 – 42; Mean: 30 ± 3.4
- 95% Han ethnicity
- 59% originally from Beijing
- 70% college degree or greater
- 75% had health insurance
- 46% owned a car



Postpartum Depression

- EPDS scores
 - Range: 0 – 27
 - Mean: 8.4 ± 4.0
 - Median: 8.0
- EPDS ≥ 10 : 39%
- EPDS ≥ 13 : 16%



History of Mental Health Issues

- **327 (96%)** of 342 women had **never**:
 - consulted a mental health practitioner, or
 - taken prescription medications,
 - or traditional medications for emotional issues.
- No association between history of formal treatment for emotional issues and PPD

Postpartum Practice

Factor	PPD		OR	95% CI
	n / N (%)			
<i>Zuoyuezi</i> caregiver				
Mother only	20 / 156 (13)		1	--
Mother-in-law + other	24 / 110 (22)		2.06	1.08, 3.92
Other only	5 / 41 (12)		1.03	0.36, 2.90
<i>Zuoyuezi</i> was helpful				
Yes	19 / 178 (11)		1	--
No	31 / 146 (21)		2.26	1.21, 4.19

327 (96%) of 342 women practiced *zuoyuezi*

Multivariate Analysis

Risk Factor	Crude OR	Adjusted OR	95% CI
Mother-in-law care	2.06	2.01	1.02, 3.93
<i>Zuoyuezi</i> not helpful	2.26	2.24	1.16, 4.30

N = 327

- Adjusting for age, Han ethnicity, being from Beijing, income, car ownership, and having health insurance

Summary of Results

- 16% - 39% PPD in this study group
 - Depending on cutoff scores of EPDS
- 96% had never formally treated for emotional issues
- 96% practiced *zuoyuezi*
- Women with doubled odds of PPD if:
 - Mother-in-law provided primary care during *zuoyuezi*
 - Perceived *zuoyuezi* as not helpful

Mental Health Needs in this Study Group

- PPD is a concern
- No history of formal treatment for emotional issues
- Mental health needs of this study group:
 - Greater access to mental health resources
 - More screening for PPD
 - More research on PPD, prevention, and treatment

Importance of Postpartum Practices

- *Zuoyuezi* is still commonly practiced in China
- Nature of mother-in-law conflict
- Perceptions of *zuoyuezi*
 - Quality of social support?
 - Life stress?
- Can inform obstetric practices in immigrant populations

Limitations

- Not generalizable
- Lack of directionality
- “Perceived” risk factors
- Assessment of mental health history
- Validation of mainland Chinese Mandarin EPDS

Conclusions

- Adds China to the discussion on PPD and traditional postpartum practices
- Mental health needs more attention
 - Greater access to mental health resources
 - More screening for PPD
 - More research on PPD, prevention, and treatment
- Informs work in U.S. immigrant populations

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