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New evidence on the prevalence and risk of peripartum mental illness amongst migrant women: A global review of the literature

Migration is known to affect an individual's health and social status, and migrant women who are pregnant or postpartum are known to be at high risk of adverse health and social outcomes. They are at particularly high risk of mental disorders, especially perinatal depression (PND). Previous studies have demonstrated the prevalence of PND may be higher amongst migrant women when compared to the general population. The determinants of perinatal mental disorders amongst migrant women are complex and may include social isolation, discrimination, poor healthcare access, and low levels of emotional and practical support. The consequences of perinatal mental disorders include a high risk of suicidality and depression in the woman, as well as adverse outcomes for the child including a high risk of low birth weight, diarrhoeal disease, and poorer cognitive outcomes. We will present updated data on the prevalence and risk factors for perinatal mental illness (depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, psychosis) amongst migrant women (refugee women, and internally displaced women) at a global level. We will synthesize the available evidence which is available to date, and create consensus on the prevalence and risk of perinatal mental illness amongst migrant women. We expect that migrant woman will be at significantly higher risk of perinatal mental illness when compared to the general population. We will discuss appropriate health system responses which may address the health care needs for migrant women in fragile or conflict-affected settings.