

The role of psychotherapy in the treatment of Post-partum depression in Nigeria

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Abstract.

Statement of the problem: After childbirth, the levels of hormones (oestrogen and progesterone) in a woman's body quickly drop. This leads to chemical changes in her brain that may trigger mood swings. In addition, many mothers are unable to get the rest they need to fully recover from giving birth. The new mother cannot explain why she is not happy yet tries to smile and giggle when people are with her. She perhaps feels unhappy but cannot decipher why she feels this way.

Postpartum depression does not have a single cause, but likely results from a combination of physical and emotional factors. The relationship between both mother and child is for the first three weeks awkward as she struggles with the feeling of lowliness that cannot be explained.

Methodology & Theoretical Orientation: A total of 20 women were interviewed. Ten within two weeks post-delivery were engaged in a conversation to find out how they felt about their new state of life. Another ten in about two months post-delivery also bore their minds. These women reside in Lagos, South-West Nigeria and their experiences are similar to what is seen in other parts of the country.

Of all living subjects investigated, of the ten within the first two weeks of child birth explained to have sought the help of a therapist when they couldn't no longer bear it. It was liberating and they claimed to have a deeper and greater level of affection for their babies respectively.

Conclusion: Post-partum depression in Nigeria is between 15%-57% of the entire maternal cycle which means it is very common amongst nursing mothers. Psychotherapy or any form of therapy as whole is not so embraced in the Nigeria just as mental illness is still been seen as a religious battle thereby having a low number of them refusing to seek medical help. It is believed that the first step to getting treatment is by speaking out and this in itself is a technique in psychotherapy.

Keywords *maternal cycle, mental illness, post-partum depression, psychotherapy, Nigeria*