

Academic calls for recognition of mental health issues for expectant and new mothers following new report

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A new report has found that substandard mental health care for pregnant women and new mothers is creating long-term costs of more than £8 billion every year.

Researchers from the London School of Economics and the Centre for Mental Health charity looked specifically at the effects of [maternal depression](#), anxiety and other illnesses. The authors said that the NHS would only need to spend a fraction of the predicted long-term cost a year to bring maternal [mental health care](#) up to recommended levels around the country. This would work out annually as around £337 million.

Commenting on the report, Dr Sue Thompson, research fellow at the Centre for Maternal and Child Health Research at City University London, said:

"The need for evidence-based management of expectant and [new mothers](#) has been recognised for some time, and is reflected in our own work. The economic costs of perinatal mental illness are clearly substantial and the limited care provision available in the UK is disturbing.

"We welcome the recognition that pregnancy-associated [mental health](#) conditions are not confined simply to the post-natal period, and that there is a real need for a strategy in relation to identification and treatment of vulnerable women. This includes developing acceptable and accessible means of supporting expectant and new mothers who experience moderate forms of psychological distress without a psychiatric diagnosis.

"The Centre for Maternal and Child Health Research is collaborating with other institutions and with service users to develop cost-effective ways of identifying and supporting these women within current services."

Provided by City University London

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