

# Maternal depression up at four years postpartum

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(HealthDay)—Maternal depression is more common at four years postpartum than at any point during the first 12 months postpartum, and is more likely among women with only one child at four years postpartum, according to a study published in the February issue of *BJOG: An International Journal of Obstetrics & Gynaecology*.

Hannah Woolhouse, D.Psych., from the Murdoch Childrens Research Institute and Royal Children's Hospital in Parkville, Australia, and colleagues describe the prevalence of [maternal depression](#) from pregnancy to four years postpartum. Data were included for 1,507 nulliparous [women](#) from six public hospitals. Participants completed questionnaires at recruitment, at three, six, 12, and 18 months

postpartum, and at four years postpartum.

The researchers found that in the first four years after birth, almost one in three women reported depressive symptoms at least once. The prevalence of depressive symptoms was 14.5 percent at four years postpartum and was higher at four years than at any time-point in the first 12 months postpartum. Compared with women with subsequent children, women with one [child](#) at four years postpartum were more likely to report depressive symptoms (22.9 versus 11.3 percent), and this correlation remained significant after adjustment (adjusted odds ratio, 1.71).

"There is a need for scaling up of current services to extend surveillance of maternal mental health to cover the early years of parenting," the authors write.

**More information:** [Abstract](#)

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