

# Almost half of all postpartum psychoses are isolated cases

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New research results from iPSYCH show that forty per cent of the women who suffer psychosis after giving birth—known as postpartum psychosis—do not subsequently become ill again.

Out of every thousand mothers, one or two will suffer postpartum psychosis, but psychological vulnerability in connection with childbirth does not necessarily follow them through the rest of their lives. This is shown in a research project including partners from iPSYCH.

"Almost half of the women who suffer a postpartum psychosis don't become ill again, excluding if they give birth again. That's to say that these women have a psychological vulnerability that is precisely related to the birth of a child, but at other times in their lives they don't have symptoms of [psychiatric disorders](#) and therefore don't require medical treatment outside the postpartum period," says Trine Munk-Olsen, who is one of the researchers behind the study.

The researchers refer to these cases as isolated postpartum psychoses.

The new study is based on a systematic literature review and a meta-analysis of published articles within the field, and the results have just been published in the international journal, *Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*.

## Good news for these women

According to Trine Munk-Olsen, women with isolated postpartum psychosis could probably do without treatment for psychiatric [disorders](#)—though, of course, with the exception of the period immediately after childbirth.

"The results are also particularly interesting for psychiatrists who are planning the treatment of women with postpartum psychosis, once the acute phase of the disorder is over. This is when decisions about more long-term treatment must be made, and if we're able to identify the women who have an isolated postpartum psychosis, it's possible that these women will be able to discontinue medicinal treatment," she says.

The researchers would like to follow up the study by identifying specific genetic characteristics for isolated [postpartum psychosis](#).

"If we can learn more about why some women have a psychological vulnerability that is particularly associated with childbirth, then we can move closer to finding the cause of psychiatric disorders for this group of [women](#), and thus learning more about the causes of psychiatric disorders in general," explains Trine Munk-Olsen.

**More information:** Janneke Gilden et al, Long-Term Outcomes of Postpartum Psychosis, *The Journal of Clinical Psychiatry* (2020). [DOI: 10.4088/JCP.19r12906](#)

Provided by Aarhus University

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