

# Examining the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on postpartum depression

June 6 2022, by Kathryn Ryan

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Despite increase stressors during the COVID-19 pandemic, a new study did not find a higher incidence of postpartum depression among women who gave birth during the pandemic. There was an increased prevalence of mood disorders among individuals delivering infants during the

pandemic, according to the study published in the *Journal of Women's Health*.

Malika Waschmann, from the School of Medicine, Oregon Health & Science University, and coauthors, compared the incidence of [postpartum depression](#) in mothers giving birth during the first year of the COVID-19 [pandemic](#) to those giving [birth](#) during the year preceding the pandemic.

Postpartum [depression](#) is a common complication of pregnancy affecting 10–15% of individuals.

The investigators found that pre-childbirth prevalence of anxiety and depression increased substantially during the pandemic. However, the results indicated that "the incidence proportion of PPD symptomatology remained stable as we entered the COVID-19 pandemic despite an increase in underlying, pre-childbirth mood disorders."

In an accompanying editorial, Michael Silverman, Ph.D. and Holly Loudon, MD, MPH, from the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, The Mount Sinai Hospital, say that "given that the COVID-19 pandemic represents a uniquely stressful time for most, and the overwhelming belief that the pandemic would significantly increase perinatal mood dysregulation and possibly disrupt infant bonding, these findings appear strikingly counterintuitive.

"Waschmann et al. hypothesize that despite the increased emotional disruption attributable to the COVID-19 pandemic globally, social restrictions may have improved certain aspects of adjustment associated with the early maternal period. Indeed, an increasing body of work is beginning to reveal that those who stood to benefit most from an improved work-family-childcare balance also reported improved [postpartum](#) mood during the height of the pandemic restrictions as well

as other aspects of health and wellness."

**More information:** Malika Waschmann et al, Evaluating the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Postpartum Depression, *Journal of Women's Health* (2022). [DOI: 10.1089/jwh.2021.0428](https://doi.org/10.1089/jwh.2021.0428)

Michael E. Silverman et al, What Studying Postpartum Depression During the COVID-19 Pandemic Tells Us About Early Maternal Needs, *Journal of Women's Health* (2022). [DOI: 10.1089/jwh.2022.0138](https://doi.org/10.1089/jwh.2022.0138)

Provided by Mary Ann Liebert, Inc

Citation: Examining the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on postpartum depression (2022, June 6) retrieved 15 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2022-06-impact-covid-pandemic-postpartum-depression.html>

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