

Does experiencing racism contribute to depression during pregnancy?

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In a recent study published in *The Journal of Advanced Nursing* that included pregnant Black women from multiple US states, feeling upset by experiences of racism in the 12 months prior to delivery was

associated with significantly higher odds of depression during pregnancy.

In the study that analyzed survey questions answered by 7,328 women, 11.4% of respondents reported feeling upset due to experiences of [racism](#), and 11.4% reported experiencing depression during pregnancy. After adjusting for confounding factors, respondents who reported feeling upset due to the experience of racism had over two-fold higher odds of experiencing depression during [pregnancy](#) compared with respondents who did not report feeling upset due to the experience of racism.

"Our findings reinforce the importance of respectful maternity care, given the mental health impacts of experiences of racism during the perinatal period," the authors wrote. "Racism is a powerful structural determinant of health with roots in a historical system of oppression that persists today in health care practices and policies. Perinatal health care providers, in collaboration with [public health](#) and other health disciplines, are ideally positioned to address inequities in maternal and [child health](#) that are rooted in racism."

More information: Experiences of racism and perinatal depression: Findings from the pregnancy risk assessment monitoring system, 2018, *Journal of Advanced Nursing* (2023). [DOI: 10.1111/jan.15519](https://doi.org/10.1111/jan.15519)

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