

Culturally-consistent midwifery care can optimize the mental health of pregnant Indigenous persons

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The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on Indigenous individuals during pregnancy and the postpartum (perinatal) period.

Despite this, less than 1% of studies examining perinatal mental health during the pandemic included Indigenous persons. The current work examined pandemic-related stressors and depression and anxiety among Indigenous women and mothers attending an Indigenous midwifery clinic.

Researchers found that a fear of COVID-19 infection, parenting and home-schooling children, and lack of support from female relatives and friends were particularly stressful. Despite these stressors, levels of [depression](#) (21%) and anxiety (26%) were lower than other groups surveyed during the pandemic and suggest that receiving culturally-supportive care from Indigenous midwives may have played a protective role.

Exploring the aspects of culturally-consistent care that may be contributing to the well-being of these Indigenous parents, as well as following them over time could help to optimize their [mental health](#) and that of their families.

The research is published in the *Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology Canada*.

More information: Sawayra Owais et al, Perinatal Mental Health of Indigenous Pregnant Persons and Birthing Parents During the COVID-19 Pandemic, *Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology Canada* (2023). [DOI: 10.1016/j.jogc.2023.04.015](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jogc.2023.04.015)

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