

# How well is depression in women being diagnosed and treated?

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Major depression affects as many as 16% of reproductive-aged women in the U.S. Yet pregnant women have a higher rate of undiagnosed depression than nonpregnant women, according to a study published in *Journal of Women's Health*.

Jean Ko, PhD and coauthors from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#), Atlanta, GA, found that more than 1 in 10 [women ages](#) 18-44 years had a major depressive event during the previous year—representing about 1.2 million U.S. women—but more than half

of those women did not receive a diagnosis of depression and nearly half did not receive any mental health treatment. The article "Depression and Treatment among U.S. Pregnant and Nonpregnant Women of Reproductive Age, 2005-2009," further reports that disparities in receiving a diagnosis and treatment were associated with younger age, belonging to a racial/ethnic minority, and insurance status.

The accompanying Editorial entitled "Depression: Is Pregnancy Protective?" by Jennifer Payne, MD, Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, Baltimore, MD, explores the ongoing challenges in the adequate diagnosis and treatment of [major depression](#), the additional factors that come into play during pregnancy, and the implications of the Ko et al. study results.

"As health care providers, we simply must do a better job at diagnosing depression and referring women for mental health treatment. Reproductive health care visits provide an opportune time to address this," says Susan G. Kornstein, MD, Editor-in-Chief of *Journal of Women's Health*, Executive Director of the Virginia Commonwealth University Institute for Women's Health, Richmond, VA, and President of the Academy of Women's Health.

**More information:** The article is available free on the *Journal of Women's Health* website at <http://www.liebertpub.com/jwh>.

Provided by Mary Ann Liebert, Inc

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