

SHORT ARTICLE

Analysing Coverage of Maternal Mental Health in Indian Newspapers: A Content Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Issues related to maternal mental health, such as anxiety, depression, and psychosis both during and after pregnancy, have attracted international attention. The World Health Organization has documented a notable occurrence, particularly in developing nations. The function of print media in raising awareness about these concerns is vital. This study investigates the extent to which Jaipur's daily newspapers in 2022 address the topic of maternal mental health. The objective is to evaluate how often this issue is covered and the influence it has on women's knowledge and understanding. A descriptive survey study methodology was employed to collect data from 250 women. The data collection process involved purposive sampling and the use of questionnaires. An examination of the content of Rajasthan Patrika and Dainik Bhaskar in July 2022 found that there was no reporting or discussion on maternal mental health. According to surveys, 35% of the participants reported experiencing mental difficulties when they were pregnant, although a majority of 84% did not actively seek medical assistance. Many respondents (90%) expressed the opinion that newspapers should publish articles on this subject. The study finds that there is a notable disparity in media coverage of maternal mental health in Jaipur, indicating a requirement for heightened awareness and focused health communication initiatives.

KEYWORDS

Maternal Mental Health; Print Media; Health Communication; Newspaper Coverage

INTRODUCTION

Mental health is as important as physical health. It becomes more relevant when it comes to females especially those who are in the reproductive age group.

Pregnancy not only brings physical changes in women but also causes emotional and behavioural changes. (1)A study conducted by the Royal College of Obstetricians &

Gynaecologists (2)found that during pregnancy and after the birth of a child, women are more vulnerable to mental illnesses. It has been found that in the process of childbirth, they face a range of mental illnesses like depression, anxiety, and other common mental illnesses. A paper published in the year 2022 'Postpartum depression: Aetiology, treatment and consequences for maternal care'. In This article discusses the aetiology, treatment, and

consequences of postpartum depression (PPD) on maternal care, as part of a special issue on parental care. Pregnancy and the postpartum period involve significant hormonal changes that impact the mother's hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) and hypothalamic-pituitary-gonadal (HPG) axes, which are linked to mood disorders. PPD, affecting approximately 10-15% of women, disrupts mother-infant interactions crucial for child development. Depressed mothers often exhibit less attachment, sensitivity, and more harsh parenting, leading to adverse child outcomes. (3)

Depression and anxiety are extremely common during the postpartum period. It is estimated that as many as 20% of mothers experience clinically significant depression and anxiety symptoms after childbirth.(4)

World Health Organization says, about 10% of pregnant women and 13% of women who have just given birth experience face a very common mental illness which is depression. According to BC American Journal, 70% of pregnant women report experiencing some depressive symptoms, and the percentage of women who fit the diagnostic criteria for depression ranges from 13.6% at 32 weeks to 17% at 35 to 36 weeks.

In developing countries, this is 15.6% during pregnancy and 19.8% after childbirth. In developing countries, the prevalence of depression is even higher, reaching 15.6% during pregnancy and 19.8% after childbirth. (5)

Pregnancy and new parenthood bring excitement and joy in developing a close relationship with a new baby. During this period, a mother's brain undergoes dynamic changes to support the important transition to providing care for a child.(6)

Dr. Megha Sharma, a senior gynaecologist says that there are three terms- Postpartum Depression, Baby Blues, and Postpartum psychosis. Post-partum depression (PPD)- Postpartum depression (PPD) is a type of mood disorder, because of the physical, emotional, and behavioural changes women face after delivery. According to the DSM-5, PPD is a form of major depression that begins within 4 weeks

after childbirth. New mothers experience the 'baby blues' after giving childbirth, in which woman feels sadness and moodiness. She becomes reluctant to everyone. About 1 out of every 10 of these women develop long-lasting depression after delivery. About 1 in 1,000 women develop a more serious condition called postpartum psychosis.(7,8)

It is noteworthy that this issue was never attached to importance in the past and both the government, as well as the private health care providers, remained unconcerned about the mental problems encountered by women before, during, and after childbirth.

Besides, antenatal care is equally important, and it is another area that needs our attention. (9)Only trained professionals must be engaged in the procedures of abortion, childbirth, and prenatal care. Psychological counselling is another area where healthcare providers could come to the assistance of women in trouble. (10) Despite the efforts made by the Indian government to mitigate maternal mortality, there are still notable obstacles that need to be addressed. Obtaining high-quality healthcare is a significant concern, particularly in rural regions. Insufficient infrastructure and a dearth of proficient healthcare professionals impede the provision of appropriate maternal healthcare. Women frequently encounter the need to travel considerable distances to access hospitals, resulting in a delay in receiving necessary medical care.(11) Moreover, socio-economic obstacles like as poverty and entrenched cultural practices serve as additional hindrances to advancement. Financial limitations hinder numerous women from accessing prompt medical treatment, while cultural expectations may deter them from utilizing the healthcare facilities that are accessible to them. These problems emphasize the necessity for ongoing endeavours to enhance the accessibility of healthcare and tackle socio-economic elements that impact maternal health.

According to UNICEF Globally the number of women and girls who die each year due to issues related to pregnancy and childbirth has dropped considerably, from 451,000 in 2000 to 295,000 in 2017, a 38 percent decrease.(12)

A study by Golden Burden by Disease Studies in 2017 revealed that 14% of India's population suffered from mental health ailments, including 45.7 million suffering from depressive disorders and 49 million from anxiety disorders.(13) The WHO estimates that 20% of Indians may suffer from depression in their lifetime. Another survey, the National Mental Health Survey in India (2015 16) has estimated that only about 10-12% of people suffering from depression in India get treated. (14)

Objectives

- Determine the extent of maternal mental health coverage in Jaipur in hindi newspapers (Rajasthan Patrika and Dainik bhaskar) and understand perspectives of pregnant women.
- Analyze recurring themes in newspaper coverage and assess medical experts' views on maternal mental health issues.

MATERIAL & METHODS

Study Type & Study Design: This study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative methodologies. It incorporates content analysis, surveys, and interviews to comprehensively assess the coverage of maternal mental health issues.

Study Setting: The study is conducted in Jaipur, focusing on two prominent Hindi daily newspapers, Rajasthan Patrika and Dainik Bhaskar. Data collection includes newspaper content, surveys of pregnant and new mothers, and interviews with media and medical experts.

Study Population:The study population consists of:

- Pregnant and new mothers in Jaipur.
- Content from the selected newspapers.
- Media industry experts and medical professionals specializing in maternal mental health.

Study Duration: The study covers a specific period in July 2022 for content analysis. Surveys and interviews were conducted over three months from July to September 2022.

Sample Size Calculation: The sample size includes:

- Content analysis of all issues of Rajasthan Patrika and Dainik Bhaskar published in July 2022.
- Surveys administered to 250 pregnant and new mothers.
- Qualitative interviews with 10 experts (5 from the media industry and 5 from medical science).

Inclusion Criteria

- Newspapers: All issues of Rajasthan Patrika and Dainik Bhaskar published in July 2022.
- Surveys: Pregnant and new mothers residing in Jaipur.
- Interviews: Experts with at least 5 years of experience in media or medical fields relevant to maternal mental health.

Exclusion Criteria

- Newspapers: Any issue not published within the specified period.
- Surveys: Women not currently pregnant or who have not given birth in the last six months.
- Interviews: Professionals without sufficient experience in the relevant fields.

Strategy for Data Collection

- Content Analysis: A thorough review of Rajasthan Patrika and Dainik Bhaskar's July 2022 issues to identify coverage of maternal mental health.
- Surveys: Administered to 250 pregnant and new mothers using a structured questionnaire.
- Interviews: Conducted with media and medical experts to gain qualitative insights.

Working Definition: Maternal mental health issues include conditions such as depression, anxiety, and psychosis that occur during pregnancy and the postpartum period.

Data Analysis: Software: Data analysis was conducted using SPSS for quantitative data and NVivo for qualitative data.

RESULTS

Data Analysis and Interpretation: The researcher selected two Hindi newspapers to find out the coverage of maternal mental health and it was found that not a single news item on Maternal Mental Health was published in both the selected newspapers in July. Dainik Bhaskar brings out pull-outs like Madhurima for women, as well as publications related to women's health as well, but not a single piece of news was found on Maternal Mental Health in July.

Rajasthan Patrika also did not publish single news on Maternal Mental Health in July. Although Newspaper started a women-centric new pull out namely 'Pariwar' but about maternal mental issues, nothing was published. The newspaper has special weekly health pages but specific maternal mental health issue was not published.

Some important points were made by the doctors and health experts during interviews on the issue. Most of the doctors agreed upon the apathy of media in general. They were of the view that not a single piece of news they found in both the newspapers in July. Dr. Kersi Chavada, Hinduja Hospital Mumbai, agreed that many pregnant women/Mothers undergo psychological changes during pregnancy. Stress, hormonal changes, desire for a male child, work-life imbalance, etc play role in mental illnesses in pregnant women. He also added that over 10 years, women became more interested in their mental well-being. However, there is still very little awareness

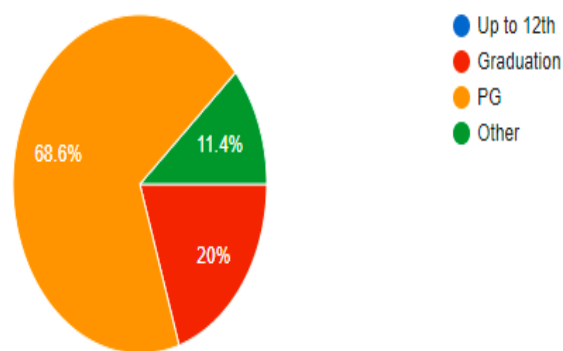
about mental health issues during pregnancy in women.

Sunil Sharma, SMS Hospital, Jaipur said that mental health does not only affects the mother but at times its ill effects are also seen on the newborn child. He confirmed that many women are suffering from mental problems during their pregnancy but very few understand it and come to us for treatment, He said that depression during pregnancy is more common in women with poor social support.

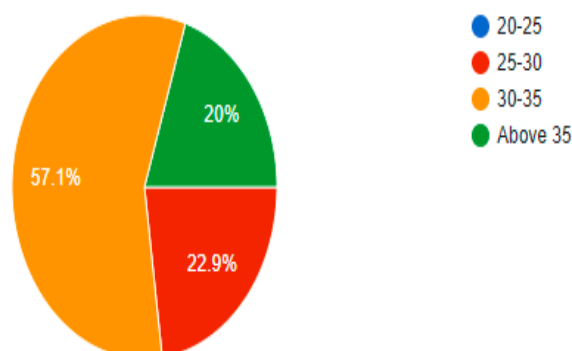
In addition, some health journalists were also interviewed to justify one of the objectives of the study. All media experts who were interviewed were of the view that it is rare to find any news on this aspect. Vikas Jain, Rajasthan Patrika said that in his newspapers news items on health have been published but specific on maternal mental health issue was not published in July.

Most of the journalists stated that stories on pregnancy are very common in the newspapers but stories on maternal mental health are still not getting much space in newspapers. They felt that the lack of journalists with training in maternal mental health issues may be one of the reasons behind the lack of coverage of this problem.

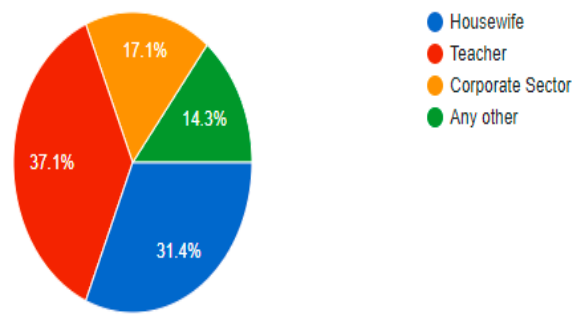
This survey was done on 250 women in Jaipur. A questionnaire was prepared for the survey in which 11 questions were asked. Pregnant women and recent mothers were selected for this survey.



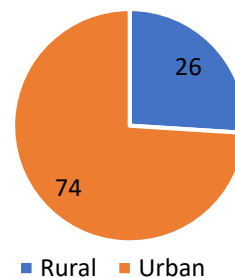
Q1- Educational Qualification



Q2- Age



Q3- Profession



Q4- Residential Status

In the selected sample size, 74 percent of people were from urban areas and 26 percent people were from rural areas.

In question five when respondents were asked about their mental issues, 65 percent of females said they did not face any mental issues during their pregnancy, while 35 percent said they did have issues.

48 percent of the respondents said that they had anxiety, while 19s percent said that they had gone into depression. Not a single woman went into a psychosis, 33 percent chose the other option.

When respondents asked if they sought mental health assistance, 84% reported that they did not seek any form of medical help, while 16% stated they sought medication.

In response to the 8th question 'Was your mental problem resolved?' 62% answered affirmatively, while 38% responded negatively. When they asked about the cause of their mental distress, 34% attributed it to the stress of needing to have a male child. 25% cited inadequate care at home, 28% attributed it to malnourishment, and 13% mentioned lack of access to proper medical facilities.

When they asked whether articles on maternal mental health should be published in newspapers? On this, more than 90 percent of the women chose the yes option. Regarding concerns about their mental health affecting their unborn child, 47% indicated worry, while 53% did not express such concerns. They said that financial strains, increased responsibilities, lack of family support, and the pressure to have a male child were identified as factors contributing to maternal apprehension about maternity.

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

The study shows that maternal mental health is a significant problem that must be addressed by medical professionals. The need to address this issue urgently is demonstrated by the fact that 67% of expectant or new moms reported experiencing anxiety and despair during their pregnancies. The fact that 84% of them chose not to consult a doctor is even more startling and indicates a serious lack of knowledge about maternal mental health issues and their effects. Newborns are directly impacted by maternal mental health, which highlights the urgency of seeking prompt medical assistance when symptoms appear. The survey also reveals how ignorant the media is about this problem. There is an urgent need to increase awareness in this area because the Dainik Bhaskar and Rajasthan Patrika, the two newspapers that are most widely circulated in Rajasthan, failed to include any coverage on maternal mental health.

The study also emphasizes how mothers' worry, and despair are exacerbated by the enduring social preference for male offspring. The urge to have male children causes many women to suffer from mental health problems; this is a topic that sociologists and medical professionals should look into more.

This study is relevant because it adds to the body of knowledge by highlighting the urgent need for greater understanding and coverage of mental health concerns affecting mothers. It emphasizes the role that the media plays in spreading knowledge and draws attention to the social constraints that exacerbate mental health issues among women.

RECOMMENDATION

Improve public consciousness regarding maternal mental health by augmenting media exposure in newspapers such as Dainik Bhaskar and Rajasthan Patrika. Incorporate regular mental health assessments into prenatal and postnatal healthcare services to promptly identify and address psychological and sociocultural aspects, enabling early intervention.

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

- The content analysis was limited to a single month, which may not represent the overall coverage of maternal mental health issues throughout the year.
- The sample size for surveys, while substantial, is geographically limited to Jaipur and may not reflect the experiences of women in other regions.
- The qualitative data from expert interviews may be subject to personal biases and may not represent the views of all experts in the field.

RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY

- Highlighting the prevalence of maternal mental health issues in Jaipur.
- Identifying a significant gap in media coverage of maternal mental health.
- Emphasizing the societal pressure for male children as a major stress factor.

AUTHORS CONTRIBUTION

All authors have contributed equally.

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Nil

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There are no conflicts of interest.

DECLARATION OF GENERATIVE AI AND AI ASSISTED TECHNOLOGIES IN THE WRITING PROCESS

During the preparation of this work, the author (s) used QuillBot

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