

Valley Mental Health on Kutv2 noon June 20, 2007
Merrilee Buchanan, LCSW

Men and Women, Both Experience Postpartum Depression

New studies indicate that about 14 percent of mothers and 10 percent of new fathers suffer from postpartum depressive (PPD) symptoms. While research suggests that hormonal changes may contribute to the onset of postpartum depression in women, “no definitive hormonal cause has been identified.”

It does appear that in both men and women the huge life changes that go along with having a baby can contribute to depression. Research highlights a link between maternal and paternal postpartum depression, i.e, men whose partners are distressed are significantly at higher risk of experiencing this depression themselves.

It is important to be aware of factors that can contribute to PPD and watch for symptoms of Postpartum Depression in both men and women you care about:

- Be aware, Postpartum Depression can begin at childbirth and last up to a year
- Symptoms often mirror general clinical depression: sadness, fatigue, hopelessness
- On rare occasions, symptoms can be more severe producing obsessive, irrational thoughts of harming the baby
- A history of depression, fatigue, marital discord, social support and financial support may be factors in PPD
- Life changes that go along with a new baby: sleep deprivation, changes in schedules, financial/lifestyle changes can all create stress leading to depression

Men are less likely to seek help for depression. They often have less contact with healthcare providers after the baby is born than women do. Encourage treatment for both fathers and mothers if you see signs of depression.