

# 20<sup>TH</sup> WORLD NURSING EDUCATION CONFERENCE

May 22- 24, 2017 Osaka, Japan

## Depressive symptoms and parental stress in mothers and fathers 25 months after child birth

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**Statements of the problem:** Most studies of postpartum depression in parents have been conducted from 2-3 months after delivery up to the child's first year and only include either mothers or fathers. Research on parents with depressive symptoms and parental stress in a population-based sample after the first year of childbirth including both fathers and mothers is scarce. However, a few studies including younger children have demonstrated the importance of good mental health in both parents for supporting the parent-child relationship. The aim of this study was to determine the prevalence of depressive symptoms, feelings of incompetence and spouse relationship problems and their mutual relations.

**Methodology:** Data from a Swedish parent-infant population-based cohort 25 months after childbirth was used. A questionnaire containing Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS) and a modified Swedish Parental Stress Questionnaire (SPSQ) regarding depression and parental stress were answered by 646 fathers and 700 mothers.

**Findings:** Parents with depressive symptoms experienced more feelings of incompetence and spouse relationship problems than parents without depressive symptoms. The prevalence of depressive symptoms (EPDS $\geq$ 12) was more than 11% for mothers and nearly 5% for fathers, 25 months after childbirth. More than 8% of the mothers stated that they had previously received treatment for anxiety/ worrying or depression/low mood, and 34% of these scored high on the EPDS in the study, which suggests that they were experiencing some distress. Among the fathers, 25% reported that they had previously received treatment and scored high on EPDS.

**Conclusion & Significance:** The result indicated that feelings of incompetence and spouse relationship problems could be important constructs for understanding parental stress and depressive symptoms in the parents of young children. It is important that Child Health Care is attentive to both mothers' and fathers' depressive symptoms and parental stress after the first year.

### Biography

Maude Johansson is an authorized Psychologist and Psychotherapist. She has mostly worked in the area of Child Psychiatry. The research topic concerns the identification and treatment of mothers and fathers with depressive symptoms and parental stress in early parenthood.

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