

A Literature Review Examining the Perinatal Mental Health of a South Asian Diaspora Population

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Background

About 10% of pregnant women worldwide and 13% of women postpartum experience a mental health disorder. Studies have shown that 1 in 3 migrant women have experienced a perinatal mental health disorder with social support being a protective factor. As the South Asian diaspora population grows, little is about the perinatal mental health of this population. This review aims to examine the research on the prevalence and risk factors associated with the perinatal mental health disorders in this population.

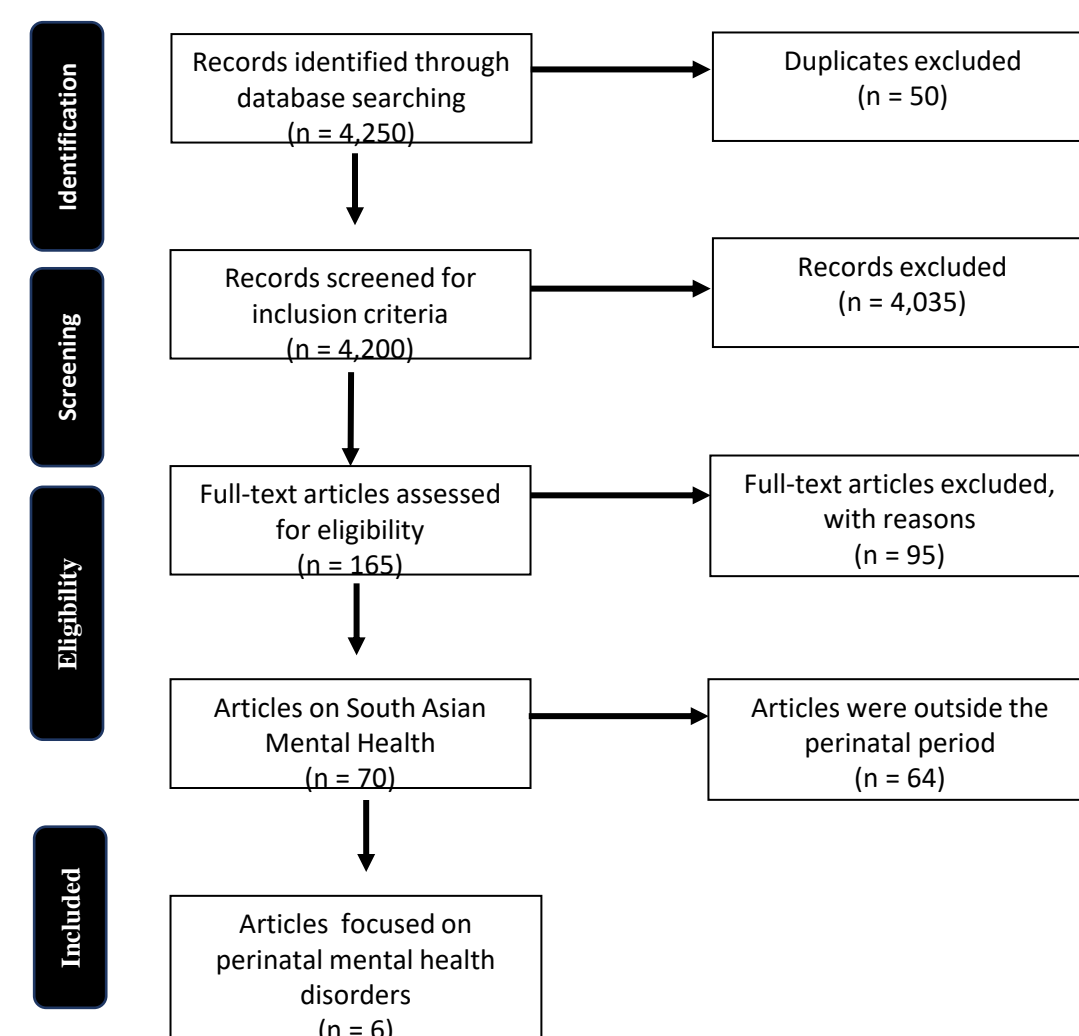
For the purposes of this review, perinatal mental health was defined as the time during pregnancy to one year postpartum. Mental health disorders included antenatal and postpartum depression, anxiety, obsessive compulsive disorder, post traumatic stress disorder and psychosis. South Asia was defined as India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan and the Maldives. The areas where this population was studied included Western Europe, and the countries included the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

Research Objectives

The objectives of this project were:

- To identify the prevalence of perinatal mental health disorders in the South Asian diaspora population
- To identify risk factors associated with perinatal mental health disorders in this population
- To examine the disparities in research that exist in the South Asian population and identify gaps in the research

Methods



Inclusion Criteria

- Studies that focused on the perinatal period
- South Asia and The West were included as defined previously
- The study takes place after 2000
- The study must be about mental health (for example, trauma, anxiety, substance abuse) and social, emotional, and behavioral determinants of mental health

Exclusion Criteria

- Case studies
- Review articles
- Studies on the biological underpinnings of disease
- Studies that took place in South Asia

Table 1: Summary of Literature Review

Author	Design	Total Sample Size	South Asian Sample Size	South Asian Population studied	Outcome measured	Measurement of Outcome	Time frame	Prevalence (%)
Prady (2013)	Retrospective cohort study	8464	2542	Pakistani	Psychological Distress	3 standardized questions and 24 item Malaise Inventory	9 months postpartum	---
			316	Indian				
			174	Bangladeshi				
Husain (2011)	Cross sectional and prospective cohort	714	714	Pakistani	Perinatal Depression	Edinburgh Postpartum Depression Scale (score ≥10)	3rd trimester	16.8
Goyal (2006)	Cross sectional	58	58	Asian Indian	Major post partem depression	Post partem Depression Screening Scale (score ≥ 80)	2-12 months post partem	24
Prady (2016)	Retrospective cohort study	8991	2602	Pakistani	Common mental disorder	General health questionnaire 28 (score ≥15)	26-28 weeks pregnancy	9.5
			1634	Other ethnicity, non-English speakers "Mostly Pakistani"				4.5
Shakeel (2015)	Prospective cohort study	749	189	South Asian	Peri-partem depression	Edinburgh Postpartum Depression Scale (score ≥10)	28 weeks pregnancy	17.5
Sanghera (2015)	Cross sectional	9683	556	Punjabi speaking w/ interpreter	Perinatal depression	Whooley Depression Screen	Pregnancy (undefined)	20.6
			331	Punjabi speaking - no interpreter				13.1

This table highlights the number of papers reviewed, screening tools and the prevalence of perinatal mental health disorders

Table 2: Risk Factors for Perinatal Mental Health Disorders

Correlation	Mixed Results	No Correlation
Social isolation		Sex of the Infant
Previous history of mental disorder	Acculturation	
Socioeconomic Status		Type of Marriage

This table highlights risk factors that were studied that could potentially be correlated with perinatal mental health disorders

Results

- Out of 70 articles that were screened, 6 articles were identified that met the criteria
 - The total sample size in the papers highlighted ranged from 58 to 9683, a subset of which were south Asians. The south Asian sample size ranged from 58 to 2602. The South Asian population studied mostly identified as Indians or Pakistanis, with one paper including Bangladeshi, and another paper than divided according to Punjabi language speakers.
 - The outcomes measured were heterogenous: 3 focused on depression, 1 focused on psychological distress and 1 focused on common mental disorder
 - Screening tools used were the EPDS and Whooley Depression Scale
- The prevalence of perinatal mental health disorders in the South Asian diaspora population was is 4.5-24%
- Risk factors for perinatal mental health disorders included social isolation, previous history of mental health disorder and socioeconomic status

Limitations

- The number of articles in the review
- The review did not include Afghanistan which is part of South Asia
- The review did not include countries with a high number of South Asian migrants such as the UAE, or Trinidad and Tobago
- Heterogeneity in outcome measures, screening tools, and time point of interest

Conclusions and Future Directions

The prevalence of perinatal mental health disorders in the South Asian community living in the West is 4.5-24%

- South Asians and Somatic Symptoms such as presence of "Tension": Are traditional screening tools missing the diagnosis of perinatal mental disorders in this population?
- Prevalence slightly higher than reported by WHO: About 10% of pregnant women worldwide and 13% of women postpartum experience a mental health disorder. What are the effects of migration on perinatal mental health?

Only 6 articles in our literature review. More research needs to be done to get an accurate representation of prevalence and risk factors for perinatal mental health in this population

- Research looking into risk factors for perinatal mental disorders needs to take into consideration cultural norms. What are the effects of marriage, gender norms, sex of the baby and effect of immigration on this population?