Author's response to reviews

Title: Prevalence of Pre- and Postpartum Depression in Jamaican Women.

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Prevalence of Pre- and Postpartum Depression in Jamaican Women.

Re: Reviewer’ Report - Point- by-Point Response

Let may say in the beginning that the findings reported in this Manuscript are part of MPhil degree Programme of my student (the first author) who was awarded the degree in 2002. It took her a long time to recover all the data files (some files got damaged and still could not be repaired) and thereafter she provided me in order to revise the manuscript, especially the statistical analysis. Therefore, the submission of the revised manuscript took some more time. I am thankful to you for granting me some more time for submission. The changes made in the manuscript are highlighted(Boldface). The responses are as follows:

Reviewer: Toshinori Kitamura
Major compulsory Revisions:

The subjects used in this study were recruited over the course of ten months (May 2000 to March 2001.). All the women (Authors have no record of total number) visiting the Antenatal Clinic (UHWI) for the first time at 8 weeks of gestation were eligible. However, only 140 women willing to participate were included in this study.

Yes, the study was duly approved by UWI/UHWI Ethics Committee on April 7, 2000.

We agree with the reviewer that our initial statistical techniques for analyzing the data were inadequate. We have revised our statistical approach and have now presented these revised results. Tables 2 & 3 are replaced by new tables. Figure 1 has been added.

Reviewer Anne Buist

Major Compulsory Revision:

Jamaican Population, in general, is a mixed type of population. The majority consists of African descent followed by Jamaican Chinese and Jamaican Indians. Female population is more than male population. The authors do not have the exact record of single motherhood in Jamaica. However, hospital records normally show that more babies are born to single mothers. This pattern is not a recent one. It may be a cultural issue. Our demographic data also indicated that 68% were single and remaining 32% were married women. This may be due to number of factors but lack of social and/or financial support is the major one. Out of 140 women who accepted to participate in this study at booking, only 73 women complied for the whole duration of this study. Forty five out of 140 failed to keep their antenatal appointments. It may be due to the fact that either they did not care or instead of waiting for a long time at the clinic they preferred to go to the private doctor.

The Zung Depression Instrument used in this study has been previously tested for its efficacy and reliability in Jamaican population (Ward et. al.,2001). As mentioned in our manuscript that greater percentages of women suffered from minimal to mild depression, a score which might not have been significant and ignored by previous authors. However, we included that score also in calculating the total percentage. Therefore the percentages of depressed women look high.

The instrument EPDS as the reviewer suggests might be good but was not tested in Jamaican population at the time of study. It is not feasible to apply now.

It is the first study being reported from the Caribbean region. Therefore, changes found in thyroid functions will significantly add in the knowledge of Caribbean people in general and pregnant women in particular. In this study, though the levels of thyroid hormones were within the normal range but significantly lower values during the last term and early postpartum period suggest a definite trend. The endocrinologists refer this as relative hypothyroidism of sub-clinical type. The Physicians do not pay much attention to this. However, the reports do suggest that such condition may lead to a clinical thyroid disorder after the delivery.

Minor Revision:

The authors transmitted duly labeled tables and do not see any thing wrong. If still you find missing labels on tables in the revised manuscript, please let us know.

There are three cities in Jamaica. One of them is Kingston, the capital of Jamaica. The University Hospital is in Kingston from where the cohort was recruited. The term 'Corporate area' is therefore loosely used for the capital city. The first line of the conclusion has been changed as suggested.
Regards

Omkar Parshad (Professor)