Author's response to reviews

Title: Interventions to reduce postpartum stress in first-time mothers: A Randomized-Controlled Trial

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Editors,

Thank you for your quick response. Please find our point-by-point responses below in blue:

My suggestion for the Conclusion section in Abstract is (My point is that: mental wellbeing is not equal with reduced stress and I do not think that a 24-hour hotline service):
Both the supporting film on modifying the cognitive appraisal of stressors and the 24-hour telephone hotline service reduces the stress in the postpartum period in first-time mothers. These interventions on helping new mothers focusing on self-treatment of the stressors can be easily implemented. However, the authors may choose other appropriate sentences.

We don’t believe the conclusion implies that mental wellbeing is equal to reduced stress. Our statement is that reduced stress “could have an important impact on” mental wellbeing. We feel this makes sense and prefer not to change that statement.

The added sentence has no citation (‘PSS-10 has been used to assess perceived stress in a number of different populations...’). I suppose that it requires not only one but some new references.

References were added as suggested.

Page 4: Illiteracy or lack of the knowledge of the Arabic language was not enlisted in the exclusion criteria. Although, PSS-10 was validated in Arabic, which necessitates that only Arabic people were enrolled into the study.

Ours is quite a homogeneous population. Although the reviewer makes a good point that we would have had to exclude women who did not speak Arabic, this was not included in our original exclusion criteria. As expected, we did not have any women who did not speak Arabic in our pool of potential patients and we did not have to exclude anyone for this reason. We will include it in our exclusion criteria if the editors feel it is necessary, but we really do not feel this was relevant in our context.

Was PSS-10 self-reported in the Validation study (ref nr. 13) or the validation of the PSS-10 was carried out through interview? It is noted in the text, that the assessors were carried out a postpartum interview. Why? If the PSS-10 is a self-reported questionnaire, then why was an interview done? Please discuss it in the text.

In the validation study, PSS was self-administered. For the few women who were unable to read, the recruiters read the scales to them and noted their responses. There were no differences in validation results between the two groups. As for the intervention study, baseline and follow up assessment data were collected through interviews (including the PSS). In the follow up assessment 75 % were done face to face and the remaining one as telephone interviews for 75 % of the women and telephone interview for the rest.
Why is it named that the interview included a ‘depression scale, and anxiety scale and questions about general health, mental health, the health of the baby, and social support’? Are the scores of the depression scale not associated with the PSS-10 scores? If it is necessary, please discuss it in the text.

We collected data on anxiety, depression and others. However, in this paper, we are only analyzing the effect of the intervention on the primary outcome which is perceived stress. Findings from the others will be shared in future publications.

I think it is incorrect to determine the significance at ‘p ≤ 0.05’ (page 9). It has to be p<0.05. There are unnecessary spaces also before and after ‘≤’.

Changed to P < 0.05.

In the Results page 9 lines 7 and 8: it is illogical that the results were not significant meanwhile the p is less than 0.05.

The statement is that there was no significant difference between the 2 groups when p was set at < 0.05. This is correct.

Orthographic fails:
In the Abstract section:
Page 2 line 15: unnecessary space between ‘p-‘ and ‘value’
Corrected. Thank you.

In the text:
Page 4 line 7: ‘hospital setting study.
Deleted “study”.

Page 5 line 12: a comma is normal written, but it should be written in upper case. ’
Corrected.

Page 7 line 18: a space is unnecessary between ‘8’ ‘-12’.
Corrected.

Page 8 line 10: a space is unnecessary between ‘full-‘ and ‘time’.
Corrected.

We thank you for your review and are submitting the revised manuscript for your consideration.

Best regards,

Hibah Osman, MD, MPH