

# Identifying perinatal depression with case-finding instruments: a mixed-methods study (BaBY PaNDA – Born and Bred in Yorkshire PeriNatal Depression Diagnostic Accuracy)

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## Plain English summary

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## Plain English summary

Depression during pregnancy and early motherhood is a common mental health problem. Less than half of women suffering from depression at this time are identified as depressed by health professionals (HPs) (e.g. midwives, health visitors).

Health professionals use a 10-item questionnaire, the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS), to detect symptoms of depression. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence recommends a shorter questionnaire (the 'Whooley questions'). We compared these two questionnaires to see how well they identify women with depression. We looked at how cost-effective these questionnaires are and conducted in-depth interviews with HPs and women to determine how acceptable these questionnaires are to them.

A total of 391 women participated in the study. Women completed several questionnaires when they were 20 weeks pregnant and 3–4 months after birth. Some of the women took part in longer interviews with researchers.

The study found that women experienced similar rates of depression during pregnancy (10.3%) and the early postnatal period (10.5%). The EPDS and Whooley questions were comparable in ability to detect depression in women. Women and HPs agreed that there was a need to screen women for depression during pregnancy and the postnatal period. Women preferred the longer questionnaire (EPDS) to the shorter questionnaire (Whooley questions). Neither questionnaire represented value for money when used on its own and did not meet criteria required for a national screening programme for perinatal depression.



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