TOPIC; MENTAL HEALTH AMONG PREGNANT AND POSTPARTUM WOMEN IN LOW AND MIDDLE-INCOME (LMIC) COUNTRIES, THE CASE OF GHANA

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Objectives

This PhD research project aims to (1) assess the prevalence and incidence of anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder and quality of life amongst pregnant and postpartum women diagnosed with preeclampsia in low- and middle-income countries, focusing on Ghana. The research will also (2) study the determinants of mental health, (3) differences in psychological symptoms and (4) coping mechanisms employed by pregnant and postpartum women diagnosed with preeclampsia.

Methods

A systematic review on existing research to map available research on maternal mental health in LMIC will be performed. Quantitative analyses will assess prevalence and incidence of non-psychotic mental disorders (depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder and quality of life) amongst pregnant women in Ghana. Up to 800 Pregnant women recruited for the Severe Preeclampsia Outpatient Treatment (SPOT) Study (GHSERC015/09/17), will be assessed for psychological disorders (depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder and quality of life) using standardised tools including Edinburgh postnatal depression scale, Beck's anxiety inventory and Harvard post traumatic scale when diagnosed with preeclampsia in clinic during pregnancy and six weeks after delivery. Their scores will be compared with a control cohort of up to 800 pregnant women who do not develop preeclampsia, and determinants and differences in symptoms of non-psychotic mental disorders will be explored. Similarly, patients 'wellbeing and disability will be evaluated using the Prom and Prem questionnaire and the WHO disability Assessment Scale 2.0(WHODAS 2.0). Focus group discussions and interviews will be conducted to ascertain the varying coping mechanisms among the participants.

Results

This PhD research will improve understanding of the mental health challenges and needs of pregnant and postpartum women diagnosed with preeclampsia as well as normotensive pregnancies. This will facilitate early assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of mental health disorders among pregnant women diagnosed with preeclampsia. This will lead to improved clinical as well as social support for pregnant and postpartum women.

Conclusions

This PhD research helps improve understanding of the mental health challenges and needs of pregnant and postpartum women diagnosed with preeclampsia as well as normotensive pregnancies. This will facilitate early assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of mental health disorders among pregnant women diagnosed with preeclampsia. This will lead to improved clinical as well as social support for Maternal health.