Interventions other than psychosocial, psychological and pharmacological interventions for preventing postpartum depression: a Cochrane systematic review

Cindy-Lee Dennis,¹,² C Jane Morrell,³ Hilary K. Brown¹²
¹University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada
²Women’s College Hospital, Toronto, Canada
³University of Nottingham, Nottingham, UK
Email: cindylee.dennis@utoronto.ca

Background/Objectives: Psychological, psychosocial, and pharmacological interventions have been established as effective preventive and treatment interventions for postpartum depression. Other interventions, including acupuncture, bright light therapy, herbal remedies, massage, nutraceuticals, physical exercise and yoga have been evaluated in relation to the treatment of postpartum depression, and evidence had been shown to be inconclusive. These interventions have not been systematically reviewed in relation to postpartum depression prevention. The primary objective of this review was to assess the effects on mothers, infants and their families, of interventions other than pharmacological, psychosocial, or psychological interventions compared with usual care in the prevention of postpartum depression.

Methods: We are conducting a Cochrane systematic review and meta-analysis. We included all published, unpublished, and ongoing randomized controlled trials of interventions other than pharmacological, psychosocial, or psychological interventions where the primary or secondary aim was the prevention of depressive symptomatology in postpartum women. Two authors screened abstracts and full texts, extracted data and assessed risk of bias. Results will be presented using relative risk for categorical data and weighted mean difference for continuous data.

Results: Diverse trials met the inclusion criteria. The methodological quality of these trials was generally not strong. Meta-analyses are currently underway and will be presented.

Discussion/Conclusions: Women’s preferences for non-conventional interventions must be taken into account in the important area of prevention of perinatal mental health problems.

Key words: Preventive interventions, postpartum depression, systematic review