

Case Study: Introducing screening in a private maternity hospital.

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Screening for perinatal depression and/or anxiety enables identification, early intervention and prevention of poor mental health for both mother and family. An effective antenatal screening program also includes the identification of psycho-social risk factors thus enabling effective management by health professionals (beyondblue, 2011). During pregnancy and early parenthood, women (and their families) have multiple contacts with health services thus providing more opportunities for mental health screening and psychosocial assessment than at any other time in life. Generally there is also significant goodwill towards any behaviours that will increase the chance of healthy outcomes for both mother and baby.

In Australia there has been more successful implementation of antenatal mental health screening and psychosocial assessment programs in the public birthing system during the decade since the National Screening program in 2001-2005 (Buist & Bilszta, 2006). More recently there has been successful implementation of screening in a few private hospitals in Australia but women birthing outside the public system are still generally disadvantaged (Kolhoff et al, 2015).

This presentation is a case study of a successful antenatal screening program in a small, private (not-for-profit) regional hospital with around 1000 births per annum. Strategies employed in preparation, training of maternity staff, engaging key stakeholders, using consumer feedback to improve the process, supporting staff and developing care pathways will be shared. In addition the authors will also describe how they successfully changed tools for the psycho-social assessment in response to feedback from consumers and organisational factors, maintaining acceptability by all key stakeholders.

This presentation is practice based evidence at it's best; all authors work in the clinical field and are committed to finding the balance between pragmatics and evidence so that families benefit during a foundational life stage.

beyondblue (2011) *Clinical Practice guidelines for depression and related disorders- anxiety, bipolar disorder and puerperal psychosis-in the perinatal period. A guideline for primary care health professionals.* Melbourne: beyondblue: The national depression initiative.

Buist, A & Biliszta, J (2006) *The beyondblue National Postnatal Screening Program, Prevention and Early Intervention 2001-2005, Final Report*. Vol. 1: National Screening Program. Melbourne: beyondblue: the national depression initiative.

Kohlhoff, J et al. (2015). *Antenatal psychosocial assessment and depression screening in a private hospital*. Australian and New Zealand Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology. Retrieved online: Friday March 18th 2016.