

Practice Based Evidence from the National Perinatal Anxiety & Depression Helpline

Jenni Richardson, Terri Smith

PANDA Perinatal Anxiety & Depression Australia

Objectives/Background

Drawing on comprehensive data from PANDA's National Helpline this presentation will enrich our understanding of the lived experience of perinatal anxiety and depression: who is seeking help, what has contributed to their need for help and why do they seek help. This will provide greater awareness of what sits beneath the surface of the women and men encountered in clinical practice and inform enquiry about their emotional and mental wellbeing.

Methods

With over 1000 calls per month we record the results of a bio/psycho /social and full risk assessment. We also record what prompts calls to the Helpline, what are the primary concerns for these families and what obstacles they have faced prior to engaging with the Helpline. This quantitative and qualitative data together with stories and feedback from service users, has been reviewed in detail. The lived experience voice is rich and can add to traditional evidence.

Results

Data from PANDA's National Helpline¹ confirms the generally accepted understanding that previous mental illness is the leading risk factor for perinatal anxiety and depression. For callers to the Helpline obstetric complication, existing medical conditions, unwell baby and maternal age (<25; >40) are also key factors. We see that just 52% of callers have shared their experience with their partner and only 22% have told their doctor. This and other data will be shared.

Conclusion/Discussion

Listening to the experiences of those that use our service provides invaluable information. This data will provide an additional perspective and potentially the missing link between evidence based practice and engaging effectively with new families experiencing challenges to emotional and mental wellbeing across Australia.

Key Words

Addressing psycho/social risk factors

Interventions

Practice based wisdom

References

¹ PANDA - Perinatal Anxiety & Depression Australia Client Service Record System
