

FEELINGS AND SUPPORT DURING THE ANTENATAL PERIOD AMONG THAI WOMEN WITH DEPRESSIVE SYMPTOMS

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Women may have both positive and negative feelings during the antenatal period. Support for pregnant women may come from sources such as family and friends. However, feelings and support have previously not been investigated among Thai women with antenatal depressive symptoms (ADS). Therefore, this qualitative study aimed at describing the feelings and support among Thai women with ADS in late pregnancy. It was conducted in Sakonnakhon, a north-eastern province in Thailand. The participants were Thai women in late pregnancy (28th to 37th gestational weeks) receiving antenatal services at seven selected hospitals (one provincial, one general and five community hospitals) and having a score of seven points or more out of 30 points from the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale. Semi-structured interview was used. Interview guide about feelings and support during pregnancy was developed and used for data collection. Interviews were audio-recorded, translated verbatim and analysed using content analysis. Thirty pregnant women aged 16-41 years participated in the study. Half of the participants were agriculturists/daily-workers with less than high school. Three categories emerged: having obstacles, having purpose and having increased secure in life. The findings showed that the Thai women with ADS felt being devalued, living with worry and fear, and having troubles interacting with others, such as partners and family members. They had concerns for their own and their baby's health, they sought ways out of their problems and they tried to understand their life situations. Getting encouragement from spouse, getting assistance from social networks and receiving support from healthcare system and healthcare providers were described as support during the antenatal period. Healthcare professionals should have knowledge about ADS and be concerned about feelings and support of pregnant women with ADS in order to provide relevant information that prevents depressive symptoms and increases women's quality of life during the antenatal period.

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