

The Importance of Social Support During Pregnancy

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Undoubtedly, there are robust documents regarding the efficacy of social support in promoting the health status of communities that nobody can impugn it. In this regard, women who form nearly half of the societies' population are in center of attention. In fact, women are considered as a vulnerable caste who experience sundry upheavals, including menarche, pregnancy, breastfeeding and menopause; of which, pregnancy could be mentioned as a real cataclysm. During pregnancy stent expecting mothers not only experience physiologic and hormonal changes, but also they are psychologically surrounded by the concept that they may not be able to handle the upcoming new circumstances. Therefore, they are in great need for social support to be enabled to overcome diffidence.

It has been well-documented that expecting mothers who have benefited from the emotional support of their spouse, family, and even the social networks during pregnancy are less likely to be fettered by the peripartum complications. For instance, pregnant mothers who have been well buttressed by their family would be less frequently affected by psychological problems, such as distress, anxiety disorders and depression, which culminates in utterly less preterm labor (1). Moreover, remarkably few of them would experience post-partum depression- a state which may result in disaster for families (2). Furthermore, weaker social support from the community, adjusted for other factors, has shown to be significantly associated with the presence of oral clefts in neonates (3). It could be explained by the premise that less effective social support during pregnancy would end in higher level of cortisol secretion; consequently, biological sensitivity to psychological distress would be in-

creased. This potentially exposes the fetus to the harmful effects of cortisol (4).

The pivotal role of maternal support during pregnancy on infants' health as well as maternal health, specially postpartum mental health corroborates that health policy makers should put a premium on emotional support for mothers during pregnancy. This could be conducted by holding educational classes for expecting parents, which would culminate in remarkably more mutual understanding between couples. Subsequently, the mother would benefit not only from her husband's emotional support but also from his practical help, including child care activities. Therefore, health care providers are in exclusive position to educate communities regarding the significant role of family support in minimizing the postpartum complications, of specific the mental disorders.

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