

PERINATAL PERIOD: ARE ANXIETY DISORDERS A PROBLEM?

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Introduction

Throughout the perinatal period, anxiety disorders (AD) are highly prevalent and clinically important. Several factors such as gender-based issues, personality traits, biology and social environment have been suggested as causal factors.

Objective

Understand the impact and the prevalence of AD during the perinatal period.

Method

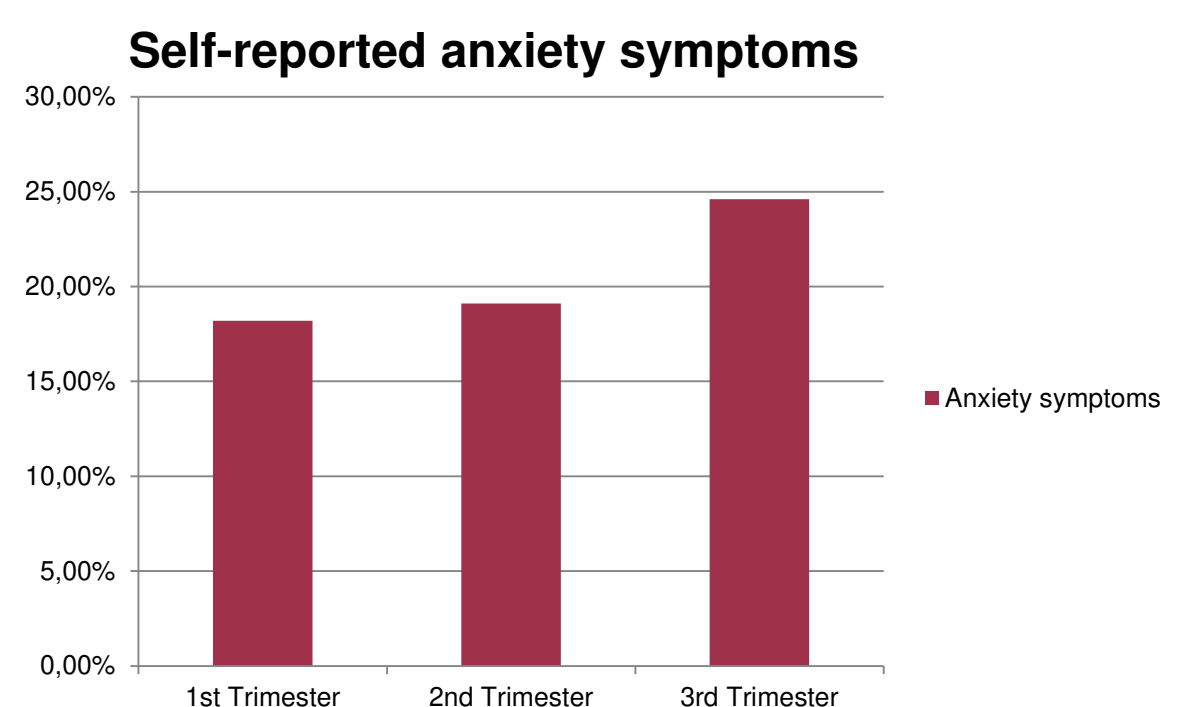
The authors conducted a non-systematic review of the literature by searching the Pubmed database using the keywords perinatal; anxiety; prevalence; risk factors.

Results

In accordance with what is stated by Fairbrother, the prevalence of AD during pregnancy is 15,8% and in the postpartum period is 17.1%, exceeding that of depression. More specifically, it was found that 5% of women have panic disorder during perinatal period and 10% suffer from generalized anxiety disorder. Another evidence found was that self-reported prevalence for anxiety symptoms increases over the trimesters.

Conclusion

ADs are common in women during the perinatal period. Anxiety during this period has been associated with increased childbirth fear, increased preterm birth rates, decreased coping strategies and higher risk for suicide. Child behavioral problems are between 10 to 15% related to perinatal anxiety symptoms, such as, for example, the risk for cognitive disorders. Perinatal ADs have been, in comparison with depression, neglected, and it is necessary to improve anxiety-specific screening and education for pregnant women and their partners in order to diminish the negative impact of this type of disorders to the women and their child.



References

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