Background

Bodily changes during pregnancy are conflicting with the social ideals of the appearance of the female body. This can negatively impact the bodily experience during pregnancy.

1. Body satisfaction: thoughts and feelings of one's own body
2. Interoceptive sensibility: Awareness of, or attention paid to, internal bodily signals such as hunger

A negative bodily experience → increased depression and poorer bonding.

A positive bodily experience → adapt to bodily changes and stronger bonding.

As many as 72% of women are not happy with or have mixed feelings about their pregnant bodies. Despite this, little research has been done into the long-term effects of the bodily experience during pregnancy.

Aim

To explore the relationships between bodily experience during pregnancy and postnatal mother-infant outcomes

Hypothesis: Poorer bodily experience → poorer postnatal outcomes.

Rationale: Mixed literature results imply unexplored complexities.

Methods

143 pregnant women (mean age: 33) completed online questionnaires during pregnancy and 3 months postnatally to capture their bodily experience:

- Body satisfaction
- Interoceptive sensibility

And postnatal outcomes:
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Bonding
- Breastfeeding rate & experience

Regressions

Low body satisfaction during pregnancy is linked to poorer postnatal bonding and higher levels of anxiety and depression.

Network

Prenatal interoceptive body trusting was the most central node in the network (centrality = 61.4)

Conclusions

Negative bodily experiences during pregnancy are associated with poorer postnatal bonding and maternal mental health.

Trust the body during pregnancy was a central component of the bodily experience associated with postnatal outcomes.

Interoception may moderate the relationship between body satisfaction during pregnancy and postnatal outcomes.

Results can help identify at-risk individuals and inform early interventions during pregnancy (e.g., yoga).

References


Contact

Lydia Munns: lm2016@york.ac.uk
@Lydia_Munns
Catherine Preston: Catherine.preston@york.ac.uk
@CEJpreston