

Non-Flourishing Positive Maternal Health: The Role of Maternal–Fetal Attachment and Depressive Symptoms in a Cross-Sectional Study

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Good mental health is related to a greater possibility of a favorable maternal-perinatal outcome.

Recently, the concept of positive maternal mental health (PMMH) has been proposed to assess the mental well-being of the pregnant woman.

Globally, there are insufficient studies that address PMMH and its relationship with psychosocial factors.

Objective

To evaluate the association between PMMH and maternal-fetal attachment (MFA) and self-perception of having ever presented depressive symptoms.

Methodology

Cross-sectional study of the Pregnancy Mental Study Project, approved by the Ethics Committee of the University of Cartagena, Colombia. Colombian women with >38 weeks of gestation, in labor or in preparation for cesarean section or induction of vaginal labor, who participated voluntarily and anonymously, with prior informed consent.

In 2025, a survey was applied that questioned sociodemographic, obstetric and clinical information, including the self-perception of depressive symptoms.

The items of the Positive Mental Health Questionnaire and EVAP [*Evaluación de la Vinculación Afectiva y la Adaptación Prenatal*] Scale, were applied to evaluate PMMH and MFA, respectively. Logistic regression analysis was performed between PMMH (dependent variable), MFA (independent variable) maternal age, educational level, occupation, marital status, childbirth and abortion (covariates). Another regression model was performed with the same dependent variable, covariates and as independent was Self-perception of depressive symptoms.

Sociodemographic characteristics	n= 560
Maternal age, years, X ± SD	25.4 ± 6.2
Previous abortion, n (%)	110 (19.6)
Teens, n (%)	72 (12.8)
Primigestants, n (%)	215 (38.3)
Higher education, n (%)	199 (35.5)
Self-perception of depressive symptoms	69 (12.3)

Comparison of frequency of low maternal-fetal attachment and self-perception of depressive symptoms, based on positive maternal mental health

	All n=560	Positive maternal mental health	
		Flourishing 94.5% ¹	Non-Flourishing 5.5% ¹
Low maternal-fetal attachment	34.1	31.5	77.4
Self-perception of depressive symptoms	12.3	10.7	38.7

Data presented in percentages. ¹p < 0.001

Associated with non-flourishing positive maternal mental health

Low maternal- fetal attachment	6.41 [95%CI: 2.06-15.75]
Self-perception of depressive symptoms	6.80 [95%CI: 2.88-16.09]
Adjusted logistic regression. Covariates: age, education level, occupation, marital status, childbirth, abortions. p < 0.001	

Conclusion

In Colombian pregnant women, low maternal-fetal attachment and self-perception of depressive symptoms were associated with non-flourishing positive maternal mental health