

**Primary presenter:**

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**Abstract title:** Implementing Postpartum Depression Screening in a Pediatric Primary Care Setting

**Abstract**

**Background & Significance:** Postpartum depression (PPD) affects 15% of postpartum women, increasing the risk for maternal depression and impaired maternal-infant bonding. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends integrating a PPD validated screening tool during well-child check-ups (WCCs). Evidence supports that PPD screening enhances early identification of at-risk mothers.

**Purpose:** This quality improvement (QI) project aimed to implement the English and Spanish versions of the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS), and create a mental health referral list to increase the early detection and referral rates for PPD.

**Problem:** A retrospective chart review from September to December 2022 found that current PPD screening involved a single unstructured question at the 1-week and 2-months WCCs in this private practice. No mothers had been identified as at risk for depression using this method.

**Methods:** The project was implemented over a 15-week period in Fall 2023. A PPD screening algorithm and mental health referral list were developed. PPD screening training was provided to staff. Mothers of infants aged  $\leq 12$  months completed the EPDS screening during WCCs. Weekly chart audits and run charts analysis were conducted. Data were securely stored using HIPPA-protected REDCap software. Project measures included PPD screens completed, documentation of EPDS scores, mental health referrals, and emergency referrals.

**Results:** All team members (N=5) completed the PPD screening training. Twenty mothers presented with infants  $\leq 12$  months during the implementation phase, 85% (n=17) completed the PPD screening, 100% (n=17) screening results and interventions were documented, and 12% (n=2) were referred. No emergency referrals were needed.

**Conclusions:** Implementation of the validated EPDS tool in a pediatric primary care setting increased identification of at-risk mothers. Approximately 12% of PPD screenings yielded positive results, which aligns with the 15% rate reported in the literature.

**Keywords:** postpartum depression screening, Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale, primary care.