Pilot RCT of a Social Media Parenting Intervention for Postpartum Mothers with Depression Symptoms

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This pilot study describes the adaptation of a parenting group intervention for social media, and examines the feasibility, acceptability and initial outcomes of the adapted intervention for mothers with postpartum depression symptoms. Postpartum depression can negatively affect parenting and the parent-infant relationship. Mothers with postpartum depression symptoms experience barriers to access in-person parenting interventions. A small, randomised controlled trial was conducted with an adapted parenting intervention delivered via social media (Facebook) or in-person for mothers who screened positive for depression in paediatric clinics. Parenting sense of competence, depression symptoms and intervention attendance and satisfaction were assessed. Twenty-four mothers (mean age 26 years; predominantly African American with limited economic resources) participated in the study. Linear regressions showed that the social media group had significantly improved parenting competence and decreased depression severity when compared to the in-person group. Attendance in the social media group was high (83%), but extremely poor in the in-person group (3%). The mothers rated the intervention positively and the majority of the mothers participated by posting comments on the group page on social media. The findings suggest the feasibility and benefit of delivering a parenting intervention through social media for postpartum mothers with high levels of depression symptoms.

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Authors: Boyd RC, Price J, Mogul M, Yates T, Guevara JP

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