

Preface

Women's risk for developing a psychiatric disorder is greatest during their reproductive years. Many women, therefore, are likely to require treatment for a psychiatric illness during pregnancy and breastfeeding. Contrary to common stereotype, pregnancy and the postpartum period are not times of relative quiescence of mental illnesses, but rather represent a time of high risk for illness exacerbation. Clinicians often feel apprehensive about treating pregnant and breastfeeding women since much of the information on safe psychiatric treatments is recent and has not been widely disseminated. Many of the studies on the use of psychiatric medications in pregnancy and lactation have been published only in the past five years. Furthermore, data can be difficult to interpret because of conflicting and inconclusive findings and a lack of awareness of the variety of issues that must be taken into account in choosing the treatment. These include the potential adverse effects on the child of untreated maternal psychiatric illnesses during pregnancy and the postpartum period, as well as the lesser known risks of prenatal medication exposure, such as neonatal toxicity and postnatal behavioral sequelae. Knowledge of the typical course of psychiatric illnesses during pregnancy and the postpartum is also necessary to make wise treatment decisions.

Psychiatric Disorders in Pregnancy and the Postpartum comprehensively reviews the treatment of psychiatric disorders in pregnancy and postpartum. Chapters focus on each of the major psychiatric illnesses, as well as on the potential impact of these illnesses on infants and children. The authors, all experts in the field of perinatal psychiatry, discuss a variety of treatments including medications, psychotherapy, parent education, and social skills training. *Psychiatric Disorders in Pregnancy and the Postpartum* will provide readers with the information necessary to make informed, careful decisions for the safest and most effective treatment of psychiatrically ill pregnant women and new mothers.

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