



CONTACT: Prabhu Ponkshe, Health Matrix
703-918-4930
201-362-6370 X 4655 (May 31-June 2)
703-615-2466 (cell)
Joe Sutherland, Burness Communications
301-652-1558

FOR RELEASE: May 31, 2006, 2:00 P.M. CST

Editor's Note: The following research will be released at the Society for Prevention Research (www.preventionresearch.org) annual meeting, May 31-June 2, 2006, Hyatt Regency, San Antonio, TX.

UNDERSTANDING POST PARTUM DEPRESSION AMONG HISPANIC WOMEN

The baby blues--feeling sad or miserable within a few days of delivery--is common and new mothers should not be overly concerned about these feelings because they usually disappear within a couple of weeks. Post partum depression, however, is a more serious mood change. It can last weeks or months and it may be related to mental health issues prior to childbirth. Lack of social support and marital discord can also increase the likelihood of developing postpartum depression.

- **Does socio-economic status affect incidence of postpartum depression?**
- **How do Hispanic women deal with postpartum depression?**
- **How does the health care system respond to Hispanic women who have postpartum depression?**

Researchers from the University of Colorado will be presenting their findings of a study aimed at understanding the prevalence of post partum depression among low and higher income mothers. The studies are also aimed at understanding how these women report their symptoms to a health professional and how they access mental health services. The study relies on data from six hundred mothers with children under the age of six years old who were called using a random digit dialing system and asked to complete a telephone survey related to their health and the health of their children. One aspect of the interview was related to asking mothers if they had symptoms of sadness after the birth of their child that they reported to their physician. In addition, the Edinburgh Post Partum Depression scale (EPPDS) was included in the survey and scored. Questions related to the use of health and mental health services as well as use of medication were also asked.

According to the researchers, over 20.3% of the mothers surveyed reported symptoms of sadness and depression after the birth of their child. The researchers will present findings on how the women in their survey scored on the EPPDS scale and report differences between low and high income women on trying to seek help from their physician. The results will also focus on how physicians dealt with women from different socio economic groups in terms of follow-up.

Sources: *Karen Peifer PhD, University of Colorado Health Sciences Center, School of Nursing.*