

A Scoping Review

Effects of Stress Management on Pregnant Women

By: Nicole Colucci, Gianna DiBello, Karina Avliyakhanova, Scarlett Pizarro, Allyson Kenny
Monmouth University, West Long Branch, NJ

Background and Significance

- Stress during pregnancy is described as “the imbalance that a pregnant woman feels when she cannot cope with demand”.
- Demands of pregnancy include being overwhelmed with doctor appointments, body changes, behavioral differences, and the stress of a new life coming into the home.
- There are many resources for women to help manage their stress as well as cope with their situation, as it is important for the mother to pay attention to their personal mental health with their use of prenatal practices for the health of their unborn child.
- High stress situations for expecting mothers have the potential to provide targets for interventions.
- Women who use their resources are able to cope with their stress, have an overall well-being, and a decrease in risk for adverse birth outcomes.
- For women with antenatal stress, it is recommended to practice prenatal yoga, regular exercise, seek family support, and even attend classes to become more educated on childbirth and child life.
- Stress management throughout gestation is a vital component to a healthy pregnancy and delivery for a full-term baby.

Purpose

The purpose of this topic was to both educate and provide research for other women as well as ourselves. We decided to research the effects of stress management in pregnant women to see if anything we do on a day-to-day basis would correlate. Being that we are all women, the possibility of us being pregnant and stressed is very possible. Our goal is to prepare ourselves for the future and see if there is anything that we could control that would help us in our upcoming years, especially because we are going into very stressful fields. It is a good way to find different ways to de-stress as we mature before we reach the milestone in life where pregnancy becomes a priority.



What is Known

- Perceived stress refers to an individual’s subjective experience of stress, which may have a greater impact on mental and physical health than the actual number of objective stressors.
- Emotional regulation is important. Suppression and reappraisal are forms of emotional regulation.
- The combination of these two strategies balanced shows the best results for stress during pregnancy rather than focusing on one single strategy at a time.
- The overall outcomes of emotional regulation can result in improving prenatal stress, improving mental health and encouraging positive parenting outcomes.

What is Known

- Mind-body interventions and techniques focus on the minds connection to the body to influence greater health and well-being.
- Introducing mind-body techniques to pregnant women in distress has been proven to significantly reduce stress levels and enhance quality of life.
- Evidenced shows mind-body interventions are composed of relaxation methods, cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), mindfulness practice, breathing exercises, and yoga
- The optimal practice period to display improvement consists of a four-to-eight-week dedication of mind-body techniques and interventions.
- Mind-body techniques are the primary intervention for reducing stress due to its safety and convenience of an expecting mother.

Search Procedures and Parameters

Databases Used

- CINAHL
- PubMed
- Science Direct

References Used

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What is Next

- In the future, more studies should be done to focus on different stress management techniques for the specific trimesters of pregnancy.
- More strategies should be investigated to encompass the different personalities and social determinants of these mothers.
- Software developers could start creating apps and websites specifically to help expecting mothers manage their stress.
- More education should be provided to expectant mothers regarding appropriate ways to manage their stress during different stages of their pregnancies.



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Please direct all feedback to: Janet Mahoney Ph.D., RN, APN-C, ENA-BC
Monmouth University; jmahoney@monmouth.edu