

The influence of postpartum PTSD on breastfeeding: a longitudinal population-based study

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Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding rates in most Western countries lower than recommended by WHO

Depression shown to influence breastfeeding outcomes

Very little research on the role of postpartum PTSD



Study aim

To what extent does maternal postpartum PTSD predict:

- (a) Breastfeeding initiation
- (b) Exclusive breastfeeding first 6 months
- (c) Breastfeeding continuation up to 1 and 2 years

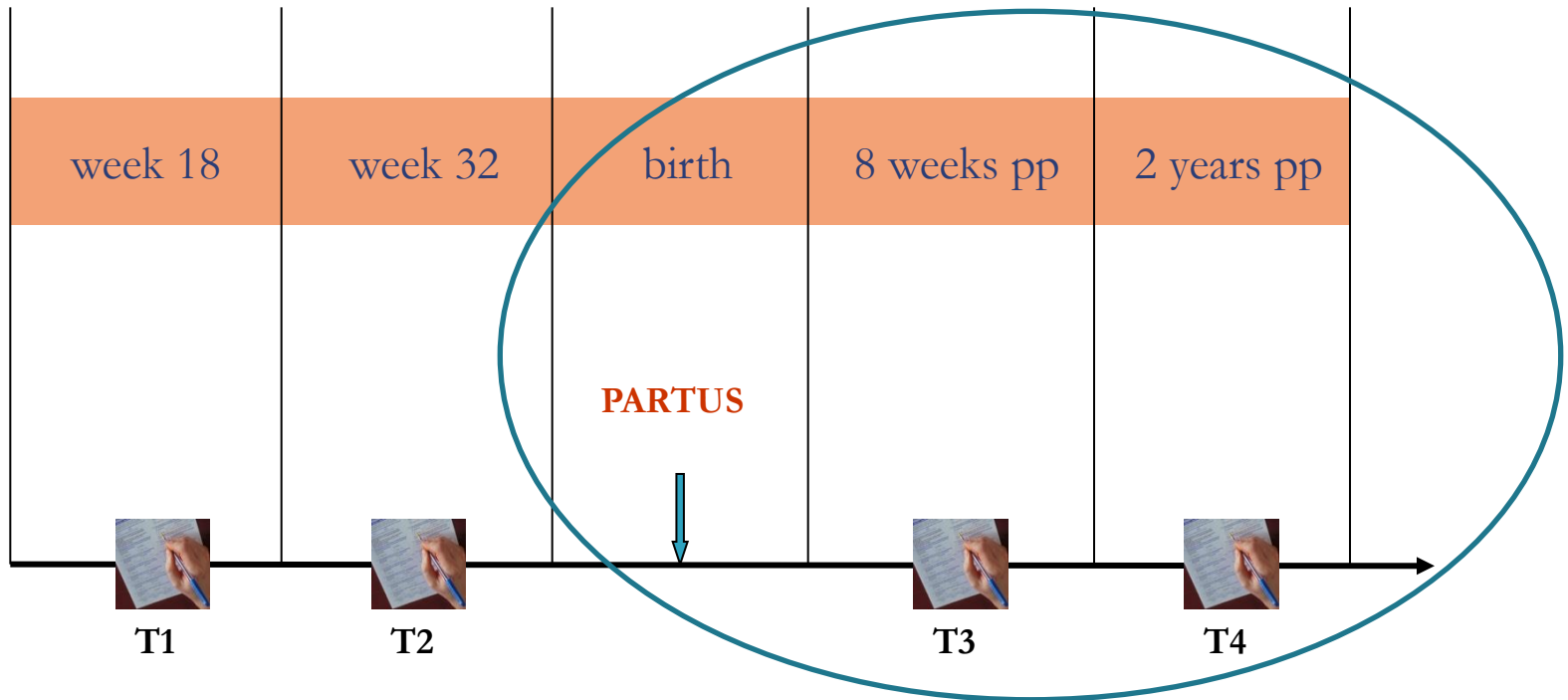


Ahus Birth Cohort

FAVN OM FØDSELEN



The **Ahus Birth Cohort:**



Measures

Breastfeeding outcomes

Postpartum PTSD

Maternal factors

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Age at delivery
- Maternal education
- Paid employment
- BMI
- Emergency cesarean section

Child factors

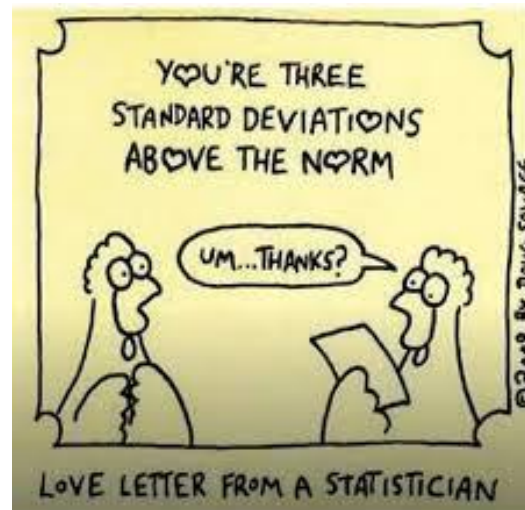
- Child sex
- Apgar Score
- Prematurity
- Difficult temperament



Statistical analyses

Descriptive and correlation analyses

Stepwise logistic regression analyses

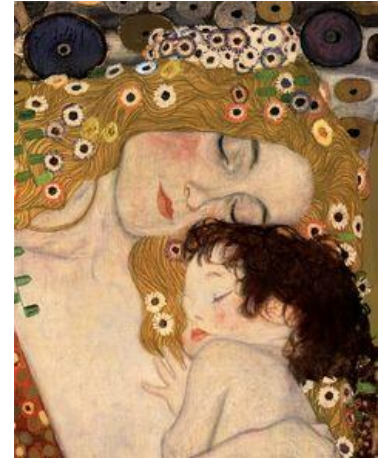


Results

N = 1,480 mother-child dyads

Mothers:

- Mean age: 32 years
- Primiparous: 52 %
- Partnered: 98%
- Impact of Event Scale: 2% above cut-off score 34 (average score = 7.01, SD=8.37)

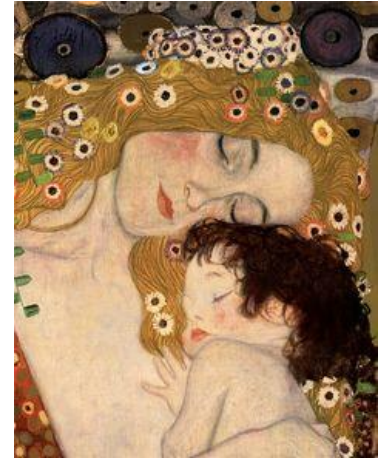


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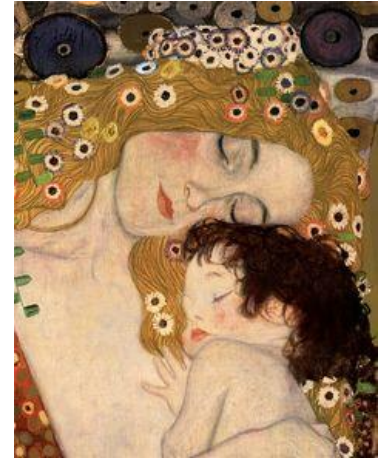


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Breastfeeding rates:

- Initiation: 97%
- Exclusive breastfeeding 6 months: 13%
- Continuation 1 year: 38%
- Continuation 2 years: 4%



Bivariate pearson (r) and phi coefficient (rφ) correlations with all breastfeeding variables

	Non-initiation of breastfeeding	No exclusive breastfeeding	No continued breastfeeding 1 year	No continued breastfeeding 2 years
Postpartum PTSD	0.15***	0.02	0.05*	0.03
PTSD avoidance symptoms	0.12***	0.05	0.06*	0.02
PTSD intrusion symptoms	0.06*	0.00	0.01	-0.03
<i>Maternal factors</i>				
Depression	0.06*	0.00	0.07**	0.02
Anxiety	0.01	0.03	0.07**	0.02
Age (years)	0.03	-0.08**	-0.14***	-0.11***
Educational level	-0.09***	-0.05*	-0.15***	-0.04
Paid employment	-0.02	0.05	0.06*	0.06*
BMI	0.12***	0.02	0.12***	0.01
Emergency cesarean section	0.10***	0.01	0.06*	0.03
<i>Child factors</i>				
Sex	0.02	-0.02	0.03	-0.04
Apgar Score 1 minute	0.01	-0.01	-0.03	-0.01
Apgar Score 5 minutes	-0.00	0.02	-0.01	-0.02
Apgar Score 10 minutes	-0.01	0.02	-0.03	-0.04
Preterm birth	0.04	0.02	0.02	-0.03
Difficult infant temperament	0.01	0.05	0.01	0.03

Stepwise logistic regression analysis for variables predicting non-initiation of breastfeeding

Independent variable	Adjusted OR	95%-CI	p-value
<i>Model 1</i>			
Postpartum PTSD	8.43	2.67-26.62	0.000
<i>Model 2</i>			
Postpartum PTSD	6.51	2.00-21.18	0.002
BMI	1.10	1.04-1.18	0.003
<i>Model 3</i>			
Postpartum PTSD	5.98	1.79-19.97	0.004
BMI ⁴	1.09	1.02-1.17	0.008
Emergency cesarean section	2.48	1.05-5.85	0.038

Stepwise logistic regression analysis for variables predicting no continued breastfeeding during the first 12 months postpartum

Independent variable	Adjusted OR ¹	95%-CI ²	p-value
<i>Model 1</i>			
Educational level	0.45	0.33-0.62	0.000
<i>Model 2</i>			
Educational level	0.48	0.34-0.66	0.000
BMI ³	1.06	1.03-1.10	0.000
<i>Model 3</i>			
Age (years)	0.95	0.92-0.98	0.001
Educational level	0.55	0.39-0.76	0.000
BMI	1.07	1.03-1.10	0.000
<i>Model 4</i>			
Age (years)	0.95	0.92-0.98	0.001
Educational level	0.52	0.37-0.73	0.000
Paid employment	1.35	1.06-1.72	0.015
BMI	1.07	1.03-1.10	0.000
<i>Model 5</i>			
Age (years)	0.94	0.91-0.97	0.000
Educational level	0.52	0.37-0.73	0.000
Paid employment	1.35	1.06-1.72	0.015
BMI	1.06	1.03-1.10	0.000
Emergency cesarean section	1.84	1.10-3.06	0.019

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Discussion

Postpartum PTSD significantly associated with non-initiating breastfeeding (risk nearly 6-fold)

Effect size greater than for postpartum depression or anxiety

No significant relationship with other breastfeeding outcomes



Discussion

Breastfeeding requires physical closeness to the infant
- reminder of traumatic childbirth

High cortisol levels during traumatic birth might
counteract oxytocin release

- possibly impeding let-down reflex of breastfeeding



Limitations

Timing of breastfeeding assessment

Selection bias

- Socio-economic status
- Ethnically homogenous

Selective attrition



Conclusion

Postpartum PTSD significantly associated with non-initiating of breastfeeding

Identifying women at risk crucial to prevent negative impact on *infant development* and development of *mother-infant bond*

- e.g., women with fear of childbirth



Takk for oppmerksomheten!



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