Edinburgh Postpartum Depression Screening Tool

The Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS) is the screening instrument most commonly used to identify women with postpartum mood disorders.

This is a 10-item questionnaire which has been validated in many different populations and is available in almost every language.

On this scale, a score of 10 or greater or an affirmative answer on question 10 (presence of suicidal thoughts) is suggestive of postpartum depression.

*Setting the cut-off score of 12 improves the specificity of the EPDS for identifying major depression; however, the sensitivity falls off significantly, making it less useful for screening.*

Most importantly it should be emphasized that an elevated score on the EPDS does not necessarily confirm the diagnosis of postpartum depression; this requires a more thorough diagnostic evaluation.

EPDS–3

A recent study indicated that the EPDS may be further abbreviated to a three question version which can be used to screen for postpartum depression.

Given the prevalence of anxiety symptoms among women with postpartum depression, the authors chose a screening tool using the 3 items which comprise the anxiety subscale of the EPDS:

- I have blamed myself unnecessarily when things went wrong
- I have been anxious or worried for no good reason
- I have felt scared or panicky for no very good reason

The Edinburgh Postpartum Depression Scale-3 exhibited the best screening performance characteristics, with sensitivity at 95% and negative predictive value at 98%. It identified 16% more mothers as depressed than the Edinburgh Postpartum Depression Scale did. “Identifying Postpartum Depression: Are 3 Questions as Good as 10?” Karolyn Kabir, Jeanelle Sheeder, Lisa S. Kelly