

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