

# **Mental health outcomes and associated predictors among mothers of preterm infants: A cross-sectional study**

Abstract:

**Objectives:** The study sought to determine mental health outcomes and associated predictors among mothers of preterm infants in the Neonatal Care Unit (NCU).

**Materials and Methods:** A cross-sectional analytical study design was used to answer the research question. One hundred and eighty-two (182) mothers with preterm babies admitted to the Neonatal Care unit were interviewed. Data was collected from June to August 2021 using semi-structured pretested questionnaires and mental health assessment standard tools. STATA 15 was used for analysis and a significance level was set at  $P \leq 0.05$  and a 95% confidence interval. Percentages and logistic regression were used in data analysis.

**Results** Sixty-seven (67) mothers (36.8%) were aged between 18 and 22. The Prevalence of negative mental health outcomes was 83.5% at a confidence interval of 95% CI [0.77-0.88]. Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) was the most common Negative mental health outcome at 93.4%. Housing conditions and having been on any medication during pregnancy were significantly associated with negative mental health outcomes at {AOR=10.6,95%CI [2.3-49.5],  $p=0.003$ } and {AOR=0.1,95%CI [0.02-0.7],  $p=0.017$ } respectively.

**Conclusion** Mothers with preterm babies in NCU experience negative mental health outcomes with most of them reported to have PTSD and Postpartum Depression. The associated predictors include housing conditions and having been on medication during pregnancy. These mothers may require routine screening to prevent them from developing mental health issues.

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