

## The Effect of Neonatal Massage On Couple Perinatal Depression Symptoms

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**Introduction.** Several caregiving activities appear to be compromised by postpartum depression including breastfeeding, sleep routines and well-child visits, such as vaccinations and safety practices. Previous studies highlighted the need for universal screening of maternal and paternal depression, as well as the establishment of early interventions during the postpartum period such as the infant massage for their infants.

**Aim.** The goal of the present pilot study is to purpose the neonatal massage as an intervention to decrease the depressive symptoms of the couple during the post partum period.

**Method.** Depressive symptoms were evaluated through the Edinburgh Postnatal Depressive Scale (EPDS; Cox, Holden & Sagovsky, 1987) and the Beck Depression Inventory-II (BDI-II; Beck, Steer, Brown, 1996) at 3 months of the baby. In the following 4 weeks, the couple was trained to touch the baby through the neonatal massage techniques. Their interaction was videotaped and assessed through the Assessment Tool for Observation of Mother/Father-infant Interaction (Dumas, Bystrova, Widstrom, 2005). At the end of the training, depressive symptoms were evaluated through the same measures.

**Results.** Preliminary findings have shown lower scores of depressive symptoms on the EPDS, and the BDI in both mother and father after the neonatal massage took place. Also parents reported lower complaints of the baby in several area.

**Conclusion.** Early intervention during the postnatal period of life of the family may lead toward a greater functioning of the couple, and to a greater sensitive approach with the baby.