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Postnatal psychosocial adjustments among new mothers: body image dissatisfaction, postpartum depression and marital satisfaction of mothers after childbirth

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Giving birth is an undeniably defining moment of every mother and the postnatal care, in one form or the other, is a crucial adjustment period for women of cross cultures. Yet, the psychosocial factors that add on the demands of new mothers and their self-evaluations are lesser known. This ethnic-specific study investigated the relationships among body image dissatisfaction, postpartum depression, marital satisfaction and objectified body consciousness perceived by women after childbirth within one to six months in Macau. Data from 70 mothers were collected locally from two clinics and one hospital. Results showed a prevalence rate of postpartum depression of 18.6% among these understudied mothers. Both body image dissatisfaction and marital satisfaction were found to contribute to postpartum depression. Body surveillance and body shame were positive predictors of body image dissatisfaction. Furthermore, significant discrepancies in body mass index and body image dissatisfaction suggest a considerable level of body image distortion. Clinical implications of this study for psychiatric and psychological service providers are discussed.

Biography

Kay Sio Nga Chang is an Assistant Professor of Psychology at the University of Macau. She actively applies the scientist-practitioner framework in both her academic and clinical work since her graduation from the California School of Professional Psychology, Alameda. She is an US licensed Clinical Psychologist and an UK chartered Clinical Psychologist who has a noticeably diverse experience base by having practiced in US, China, Hong Kong and Macau. She also volunteers for going consultations in abuse cases and disaster trauma work. Her research interests include the applied aspects of Positive Psychology, Medical Anthropology, professional development issues, addictive behaviors, creativity factors and resilient capacities.

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