



Signs, Causes, Symptoms of Cryptic Pregnancy and its Psychological Implications

Gayli Bekker*

Department of Obstetrics, University Medical Center Utrecht, Utrecht, The Netherlands

DESCRIPTION

Pregnancy is typically an eagerly anticipated and well-recognized experience. However, there are rare instances when a woman remains unaware of her pregnancy until late into the term or even until childbirth. This phenomenon is known as cryptic pregnancy or stealth pregnancy. By shedding light on this intriguing phenomenon, we aim to increase awareness and understanding of cryptic pregnancies. Cryptic pregnancy is a condition where a woman remains unaware of her pregnancy despite the presence of a developing fetus in her womb. It is estimated that approximately 1 in 475 pregnancies are cryptic, although the exact prevalence is challenging to determine due to its rarity and the diverse range of factors contributing to it.

Causes of cryptic pregnancy

Hormonal imbalances: Hormonal irregularities, such as variations in human chorionic gonadotropin levels, can lead to atypical pregnancy symptoms or suppress typical signs, such as missed periods or positive pregnancy tests.

Obesity: Excess weight can make it more difficult to detect physical changes associated with pregnancy, such as fetal movements or abdominal enlargement.

Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS): Women with PCOS may experience irregular periods, making it more challenging to recognize a missed period as a potential sign of pregnancy.

Stress and Psychological Factors: High levels of stress, trauma, or psychological conditions, such as dissociative disorders, may contribute to the mind's ability to block or repress the awareness of pregnancy.

Signs and symptoms

Cryptic pregnancies can present with a wide range of signs and symptoms, which may be subtle, ambiguous, or mistaken for other conditions.

Absence of menstrual periods is a common indicator of pregnancy, women with irregular periods or hormonal imbalances may not recognize the significance of a missed period.

Lack of classic pregnancy symptoms includes common pregnancy symptoms, such as morning sickness, breast tenderness, or weight gain, may be absent or minimal in cryptic pregnancies.

Misinterpretation of symptoms in one woman may attribute pregnancy-related symptoms, such as fatigue or weight gain, to other factors like stress, illness, or normal fluctuations in their bodies.

Psychological implications

Cryptic pregnancy can have profound psychological effects on women and their families. The surprise and shock of discovering an unknown pregnancy can elicit a wide range of emotions, including confusion, denial, anxiety, and even disbelief. For some women, the lack of prenatal care and preparation can produce additional challenges and anxieties when it comes to the health and well-being of both the mother and the unborn child. Late recognition of pregnancy may also limit access to important prenatal interventions and screenings, potentially impacting the long-term health outcomes for both mother and baby. Family and social dynamics can be significantly affected by cryptic pregnancies. Loved ones, partners, and friends may struggle to comprehend or adjust to the sudden revelation of an unknown pregnancy, leading to relationship strain or emotional turmoil. If a cryptic pregnancy is suspected or discovered, seeking medical care is essential to ensure the well-being of both the mother and the baby. Healthcare professionals can provide the necessary assessments, guidance, and prenatal care required for a healthy pregnancy and delivery. Emotional support is also crucial during this time. Open communication with partners, family, and friends can foster understanding and empathy.

Correspondence to: Gayli Bekker, Department of Obstetrics, University Medical Center Utrecht, Utrecht, The Netherlands, E-mail: gaylibekker@gmail.com

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