



**THE UNIVERSITY OF
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**A NEEDS ASSESSMENT OF FACTORS
INFLUENCING THE MENTAL HEALTH OF
NEW MOTHERS IN RURAL VIETNAM**

Trang Nguyen Thi Thu
Health Program Evaluation
School of Population Health
University of Melbourne

Supervised by
Associate Professor Jane Fisher
Ms Rosemary McKenzie

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Abstract

Aim: The needs assessment aims to estimate the prevalence of perinatal mental health disorders among pregnant women and mothers with infants and to examine the factors influencing women's mental health condition in rural Vietnam.

Method: 218 women either in the third trimester of pregnancy or within 2 months postpartum were assessed (phase 1) and followed-up to 14-16 months after giving birth (phase 2) in a Northern delta rural province in Vietnam. The study participants were interviewed by structured questionnaire interview for socio-economic information and assessed by a "gold standard" psychiatrist using the Structured Clinical Interview for DSM-IV (SCID) for mental health condition. The data was analyzed by STATA 9 and descriptive analysis, univariate and multivariate logistic regression were employed to identify the prevalence and determinants.

Results: Among 218 study participants, 75 (34.5%) in phase 1 and 42 (19.3%) in phase 2 had common mental disorders (depression, generalized anxiety, dysthymia, panic and combination of anxiety and depression disorders). The rate was similar between antenatal and postnatal groups in phase 1. After adjustment for potential confounders, low care and high control from husbands, having no one to confide in, non-affectionate relationship with mother, coincidental adversity events, domestic and family violence and number of children were associated significantly with likelihood of having common perinatal mental health problems.

Conclusion: The prevalence of common maternal mental disorders and influencing factors in rural Vietnam are consistent with other findings in resource-constrained settings. However, the problem is not yet recognized by the government and community.

Recommendation: There is a need of low cost, low stigma and universal intervention to tackle the high prevalence of common mental disorders in rural Vietnam. The findings suggest the establishment of a club of mothers which includes representations of commune health center, local authority and social organizations (e.g. women's union). The club is a forum which aims to equip mothers with health information (antenatal and postnatal classes), financial support (credit scheme) and daily skills.