

Paternal Postpartum Depression

Semi-finalist

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Image location: Hospital Room in Edmonton



Image Description

This image portrays a new father holding his daughter within the first 24 hours of her life. The father supports the delicate newborn for the first time in an awkward, protective cradle, with mixed emotions of love, fear, hope, and possible uncertainty. This child is helpless and relies on the care of her parents. During pregnancy, there are months of preparation, imagery, and emotions leading to the birth of a child. What will this child be when they grow up? Will I be a good parent? Will I be able to provide for the growing family? What if I cannot keep them safe? Following the initial joy and excitement from the birth, research has shown fathers within the postpartum period of parenthood report feelings of anxiety and depression, as the transition into parenthood can be unfamiliar, exhausting and isolating. By completing a narrative review, I explored the impact of the postpartum period on the mental health status of fathers and provided recommendations for screening and support.

Image Creation

This image was captured while in the hospital following the birth of our daughter. The man in the photo is my husband, holding our daughter in a way that showed me his instinctual, protective, paternal nature. He had never held an infant prior and asked me if this was the correct way to support her. She was tiny, fragile,

and hungry. The photo was taken as a candid photo with an iPhone to capture this core memory. I became a mother the moment I conceived, but I watched my husband become a father in this moment captured. Our new chapter as a family of three was unfolding before my eyes.