

Post Natal Dilemmas
Ranges Community Health Service
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Abstract

The focus of this program was to implement and evaluate the efficacy of an innovative and creative intervention strategy for first time mothers who were experiencing post natal depression. Post natal depression results in significant emotional and financial cost to the community, causes incredible suffering in the women concerned, places immense pressure on the family and couple relationship and perhaps most importantly is of critical importance to the infants affected, resulting in significant cognitive, emotional and social functioning deficits. This program also represented a unique opportunity for collaboration between community-based agencies within the primary care sector in the early intervention and treatment of post natal depression. The program employed a treatment method with a focus not just on the woman but included the infant and the father. Results indicated that following completion of the program, the level of postnatal depression decreased significantly, the interaction between the mother and the infant produced more positive feelings, maternal health improved and the mothers were feeling more competent as parents. Implementation and evaluation of this program has added to the evidence based practice in primary health care. The findings have highlighted the importance of replicable and sustainable programs that utilize a community framework and acknowledge the needs of the family. By utilizing a collaborative approach, this program also highlighted that working in partnership with other agencies can only benefit the long term health needs of the target group.