



# PERINATAL SUPPORT WASHINGTON

## Paternal Postpartum Depression

Postpartum depression is generally considered a maternal phenomenon, and most research about postpartum mood disorders centers around new mothers. But fathers can and do experience these issues as well.

A recent study in the journal *Couple and Family Psychology: Research and Practice* followed 199 couples whose child was 4.5 months old at the postpartum assessment and 45.5 months at the toddler assessment. Each parent separately filled out a questionnaire about his or her mood and child's behavior.

Results of the study suggest that postpartum depression in dads is present and can affect children's behavior and emotional health just as much as a mom's postpartum depression. Researchers also found that for both moms and dads, postpartum depression often predicted future depression and interpersonal conflict, which then was associated with anxiety and behavioral issues in their toddlers.

It seems like common sense, doesn't it? Hopefully, this and other studies like it will increase attention to postpartum mood disorders in both mothers and fathers.

Fisher, S. D., Brock, R. L., O'Hara, M. W., Kopelman, R., & Stuart, S. (2015) Longitudinal contribution of maternal and paternal depression to toddler behaviors: Interparental conflict and later depression as mediators. *Couple and Family Psychology: Research and Practice*, 4(2), 61-73. Abstract at <http://psycnet.apa.org/psycinfo/2015-09322-001/>