

**MATERNAL DEPRESSION; A DOCUMENTATION OF
THE PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF
MOTHERS IN THE SEMI-URBAN AREAS OF
DISTRICT RAWALPINDI, PAKISTAN**



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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my revered teacher and supervisor, Sir Shaheer Ellahi Khan, who has not only enlightened me with the most insightful experiences in the classroom throughout my academic journey, but has also guided me in my practical life so far. This thesis would not have been possible without his motivation and support. I always admire and look up to him, and he has always inspired me as a teacher, as a researcher and as a human being. I thank Sir Shaheer Ellahi Khan for giving me such an amazing experience of being a student.

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the pre-diagnosis perceptions and experiences of semi-urban women regarding maternal depression, their experiences of reaching the health facility, acceptance of the label by them and their families, and the issues in the follow-up of its treatment. It documents the whole episode of maternal depression using the patient's end of Kleinman's Explanatory Model of Illness, and also argues that the sociocultural perspectives of women play an important role in the formulation of their experiences of the illness as well as their care seeking behaviour. The main focus group of this study includes the women diagnosed with maternal depression and registered in the rural health centre of Khayaban e Sir Syed and the Tehsil Headquarter Hospital of Taxila that were subject to the Rural Health Sector Reform Project in Punjab. The study also analyzes and documents the preference of religious and cultural coping mechanisms and poor compliance with medical services, hence creating hurdles in follow-up.

This study is the first of its kind in Pakistan with the application of Kleinman's explanatory model and can be extended on a broader level in order to get a deeper understanding of patient perceptions regarding maternal depression, its symptoms and treatment, so that awareness can be raised, service provision can be made better, and follow up to the treatment by such patients can be ensured.

Keywords: *Maternal Depression, Postnatal Depression, Culture, Religion, Tension/Stress, Label, Follow-Up, Coping Mechanisms, Lady Health Worker (LHW), Kleinman's Explanatory Model (EM) of Illness, Rural Health Centre (RHC), Tehsil Headquarter Hospital (THQ)*