



RISEUP-PPD
Research Network
in PeriPartum
Depression Disorder



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**The Research Innovation and Sustainable Pan-European Network in
Peripartum Depression Disorder
Riseup-PPD COST ACTION (CA18138)**

World Maternal Mental Health Day 2021

#maternalMHmatters

World Maternal Mental Health Day (MMH Day) 2021 is aimed at raising awareness surrounding maternal mental health issues worldwide. It is celebrated each year on the first Wednesday of May, deliberately chosen close to “Mother’s Day” and “Mental Health Week”. On this day, maternal mental health activists, researchers, clinicians and people with lived experience come together to **raise awareness** and promote **equal availability** of mental health services for all women.

Riseup-PPD is an EU-funded COST Action dedicated to promoting women's health in the peripartum period and to achieving a more standardized and unified approach in recognizing, treating, and preventing peripartum depression (PPD). It is an international, interdisciplinary network that joined forces to bring about changes in the field of perinatal mental health.

Pregnancy and the first year postpartum – referred to as the **peripartum period** – constitute a period of tremendous physiological, psychological, and social changes in women's lives. It is now well-established that the transition to motherhood is increasing women’s vulnerability to the development of mental disorders. It is estimated that 1 in 5 women will develop mental health problems during pregnancy or within the first year postpartum (Hahn-Holbrook et al., 2018). The most prevalent peripartum mental health problems are depression and anxiety, with a prevalence of up to 20% globally (Fawcett, 2019; Shorey et al., 2019), while in some countries, prevalence of PPD is estimated to be even higher (Halbreich & Karkun, 2006).

PPD is often referred to as the “thief that steals motherhood” (Beck, 1999), as it adversely affects the mother and her overall health, the infant’s health and development, disrupting mother-infant dyad and family relationships. Furthermore, putting a strong burden on society as a whole (Bauer et al., 2014). Additionally, research shows that many cases of postpartum mood disorders are undetected and therefore, untreated (Coates et al., 2004). This means that a large number of mothers suffer in silence, as the stigma and the lack of knowledge surrounding mental illnesses are significant **barriers to accessing healthcare**.

The mental health and wellbeing of expectant and new mothers may be even more fragile in the midst of the current pandemic of the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19). In light of the unprecedented crisis brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, protocols for prenatal care and childbirth have been changing all over Europe. In the interests of safety, new practices are being adopted by perinatal health care services that seem to contrast with respectful and supported birth and postpartum period, negatively impacting new mothers' mental health and consequently their newborn. Emerging evidence shows that perinatal mental disorders have increased since the COVID-19 outbreak, suggesting that COVID-19 may place an **additional burden** on perinatal women, with potential adverse outcomes on their mental health (Motrico et al., 2020).

Riseup-PPD is proud to have become a global partner of the **World Maternal Mental Health Day (WMMH Day) campaign** to raise awareness and enforce changes in peripartum mental health. The key message of the campaign is that **maternal mental health matters**, and that women, as well as their family and friends, need to recognize the signs of maternal mental problems and that they are not alone. Each year more researchers, organizations and institutions are recognizing the importance of this day and coming together for this cause.

Show your support, sign the **WMMH Day campaign's** petition to get official recognition of the World Maternal Mental Health Day and become part of social change! Let us join forces to ensure equal health care and support for pregnant and postpartum women.

Sign the WMMH Day campaign petition here: <https://wmmhday.postpartum.net/call-on-the-un-to-recognize-world-maternal-mental-health-day/>

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