

From Mother to Child: The Repercussions of Maternal Depression

Nedra Zouabi, Sabrine Ben Youssef, Syrine Laaribi, Samia Belhssan, Amine Ksaa, Mongi Mekki, Mohssen Belghith, Lassaad Sahnoun.

Pediatric surgery department, Fattouma Bourguiba Hospital

Introduction:

Maternal depression is a prevalent mental health condition that affects a significant proportion of women.

Its impact extends beyond the mother's well-being, influencing the well-being of the child.

A strong link has been demonstrated between maternal depressive symptoms and an increased risk of child maltreatment, including neglect, emotional abuse, and physical violence.

The aim of this study is to assess the consequences of maternal mental health for child physical and psychological development.

Materials:

This is a retrospective study, investigating cases of child trauma resulting from maternal depression.

Results:

During the study period, two children were victims of trauma secondary to maternal abuse.

The first patient, a 3-year-old, presented with abrasions and bite marks across the entire body, as well as a hematoma on the left thigh. The body scan revealed a left pulmonary contusion along with bilateral rib fractures.

Abdominal imaging revealed hepatic contusions and lacerations, along with a splenic fracture. Ultrasound of the left thigh revealed a Morel-Lavallée lesion.

The patient underwent clinical, biological, and radiological monitoring, along with drainage of the fluid collection in the left thigh.

Investigations revealed that the patient was born out of wedlock and that the mother suffers from severe depression.

Following a favorable clinical course, the patient was referred to a foster family.

The second patient was a 1-month-old infant admitted for a penetrating injury to the right lumbar region.

Abdominal CT revealed a parietal wall defect reaching the peritoneum, as well as pneumoperitoneum.

Surgical exploration showed no digestive perforation.

Investigations revealed that the assault was carried out by the mother, who was experiencing postpartum depression.

Conclusion:

Child maltreatment secondary to maternal depression remains a serious and under-recognized public health issue.

These cases highlight the importance of early detection and management of maternal mental health disorders to prevent harm to vulnerable children.



Figure1: penetrating injury to the right lumbar region.