

Vermont PRAMS Data Brief

Prenatal Counseling – part 8 Postpartum Depression

This is a report on the Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS), a survey conducted on a sample of Vermont women with live births since 2001. This report includes data from 2004-2008.

Included in the survey are questions about the content of prenatal care. Previous reports have examined trends in prenatal counseling, differences in responses across demographics for the prenatal counseling questions, and compared maternal behaviors and birth outcomes with prenatal counseling in specific topic areas. This report focuses on counseling and postpartum depression risk. The counseling question examined here differs slightly from those earlier in this series, as it asks about care content during pregnancy *and after delivery*. The exact wording for the questions is included at the end of this report.

Since 2004, PRAMS has asked two questions which can be used to gauge a woman's risk for postpartum depression:

*Since your new baby was born, how often have you felt down, depressed or hopeless?
(Always, Often, Sometimes, Rarely, Never)*

Since your new baby was born, how often have you had little interest or little pleasure in doing things? (Always, Often, Sometimes, Rarely, Never)

Mothers were considered to be at risk for postpartum depression if they answered *Always* or *Often* to either question.

Prenatal and Postpartum Counseling and Postpartum Depression:

- Over 90% of mothers indicated that a health care worker had talked with them about “baby blues” or postpartum depression either during or after their most recent pregnancy.
- First time mothers were significantly more likely than mothers with a previous live birth to report having a discussion about postpartum depression with a health care worker.
- Mothers who did not report a discussion of postpartum depression are significantly more likely to report being at risk for postpartum depression.
- Risk for postpartum depression is higher for younger mothers, mothers with lower education levels, and WIC enrollees.
- Despite being at increased risk, mothers on WIC and mothers with no college education were less likely to report counseling on postpartum depression.

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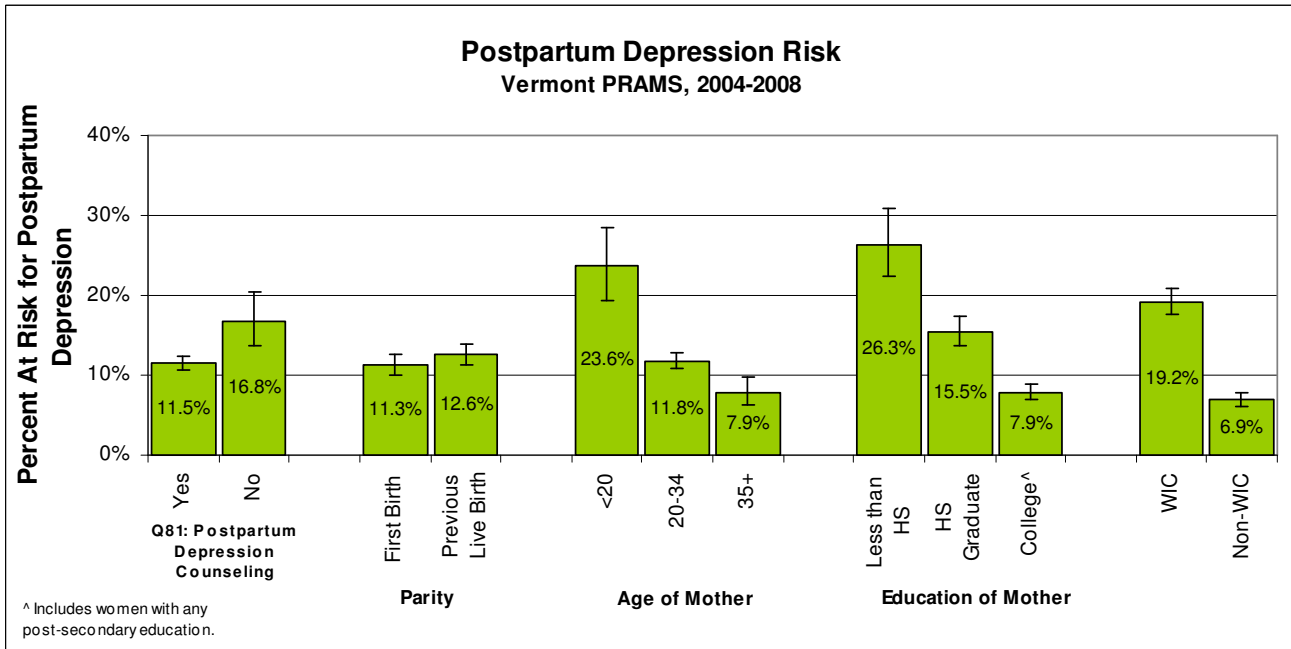
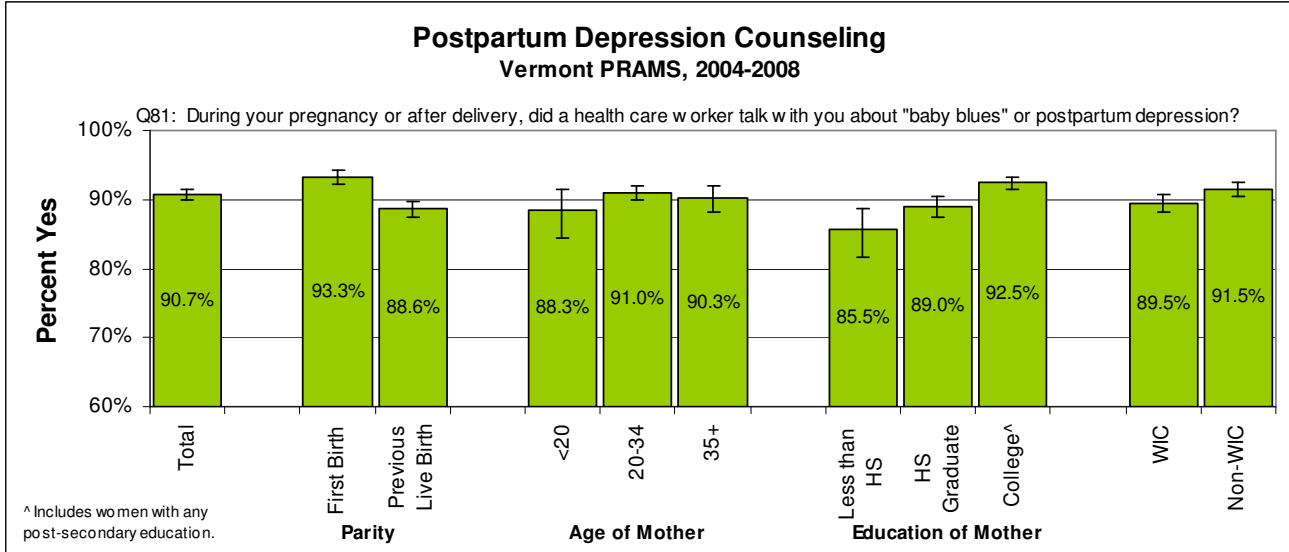
Postpartum Depression and Health Behaviors

An earlier data brief ([10/24/2008](#)) outlined the association between postpartum depression and postpartum health behaviors using data from 2004-2006. Of note from that data brief:

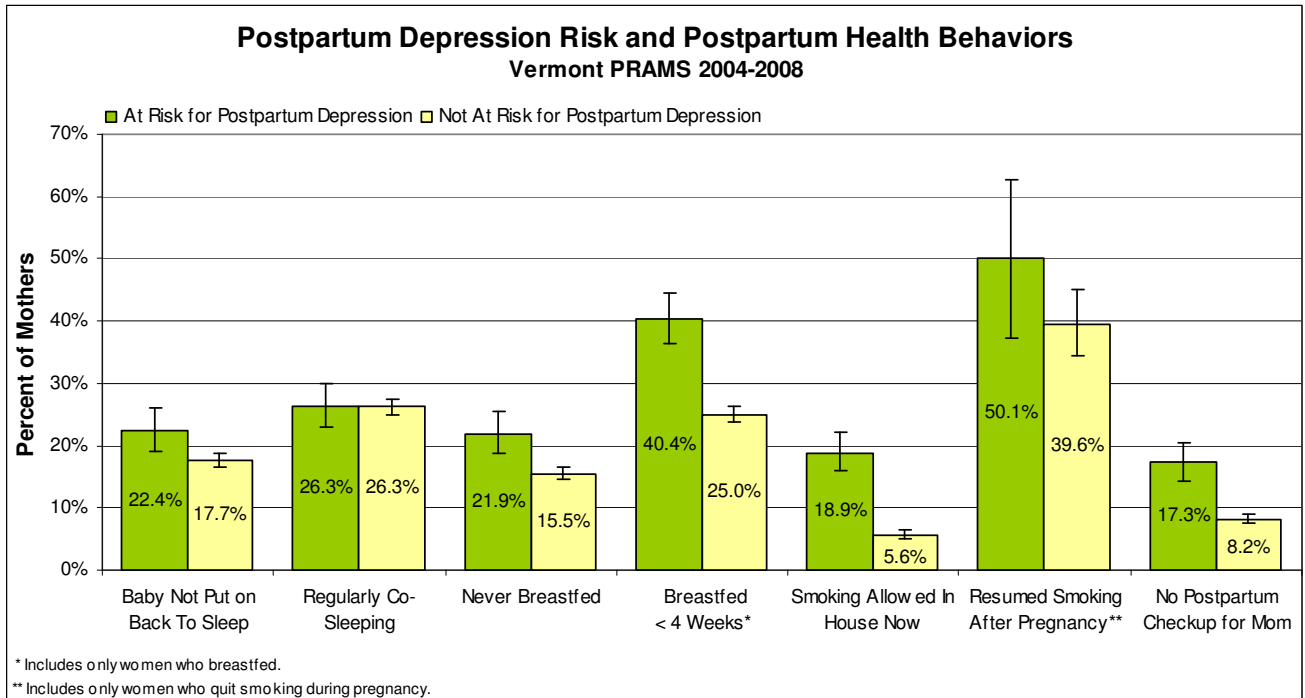
- Mothers at risk for postpartum depression are significantly less likely to put their child to sleep on his or her back.
- Women at risk for depression were less likely to initiate breastfeeding, and if they did breastfeed they were much more likely to stop breastfeeding before their baby was 4 weeks old.
- Mothers at risk for postpartum depression were 3 times more likely to allow smoking in the house.
- Women at risk for depression were significantly less likely to have a postpartum checkup for themselves.

An update on these data is included here using data from 2004-2008.

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PRAMS Mental Health Questions:

81. At any time during your most recent pregnancy or after delivery, did a doctor, nurse, or other health care worker talk with you about “baby blues” or postpartum depression?

- No
 Yes

82a. Since your new baby was born, how often have you felt down, depressed, or hopeless?

- Always
 Often
 Sometimes
 Rarely
 Never

82b. Since your new baby was born, how often have you had little interest or little pleasure in doing things? (same choices as Q82a)

Other PRAMS Questions used in this brief:

9. Before you got pregnant with your new baby, did you ever have any other babies who were born alive?

- No
 Yes

31. During your most recent pregnancy, were you on WIC (the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children)?

- No
 Yes

35. In the 3 months before you got pregnant, how many cigarettes did you smoke on an average day? (A pack has 20 cigarettes.)

- 41 cigarettes or more
 21 to 40 cigarettes
 11 to 20 cigarettes
 6 to 10 cigarettes
 1 to 5 cigarettes
 Less than 1 cigarette
 None (0 cigarettes)

36. In the last 3 months of your pregnancy, how many cigarettes did you smoke on an average day? (same choices as Q35)

37. How many cigarettes do you smoke on an average day now? (same choices as Q35)

54. Did you ever breastfeed or pump breast milk to feed your new baby after delivery?

- No
 Yes Go to Question 56

56. Are you still breastfeeding or feeding pumped milk to your new baby?

- No
 Yes Go to Question 59

57. How many weeks or months did you breastfeed or pump milk to feed your baby?

- _____ Weeks OR _____ Months
 Less than 1 week

62. How do you most often lay your baby down to sleep now?

- On his or her side
 On his or her back
 On his or her stomach

63. How often does your new baby sleep in the same bed with you or anyone else?

- Always
 Often
 Sometimes
 Rarely
 Never

75. Which of the following statements best describes the rules about smoking *inside* your home now?

- No one is allowed to smoke anywhere inside my home
 Smoking is allowed in some rooms or at some times
 Smoking is permitted anywhere inside my home