# AN EXPLORATION INVOLVING FATHERS WHO EXPERIENCE DEPRESSIVE SYMPTOMS DURING THE PERINATAL PERIOD

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## INTRODUCTION

- 1 in 10 fathers will suffer from depression during their partners pregnancy or after the birth of a baby, yet fathers are not routinely asked by health professionals about their mental health.
- Poor parental mental health can have a devastating impact on children and families leading to poor outcomes for children.
- There are currently no clinical guidelines or screening tools available to detect mental health problems, such as depression, in a paternal population.
- Although we know depression is experienced differently by men in the general population, currently we do not know how men experience depression during the perinatal period.



## RESEARCH QUESTION

What symptoms do fathers experience when they develop depression during the perinatal period?

## RECRUITMENT

Online via various organisations social media and via my own social media and study website to recruit fathers from across the UK.

## DATA ANALYSIS

Interviews were transcribed verbatim and themes have been identified using Moustakas modified van Kaam method of analysis.

## INCLUSION CRITERIA

Fathers with a clinical or self diagnosis of depression.

Fathers with a pregnant partner or a child under 2 years.

## EXCLUSION CRITERIA

Fathers under 16 years.

Non-English Speakers

Loss of pregnancy, partner or infant.

## DATA COLLECTION

Semi-structured interviews – Telephone (=6) /Video Call (=4) /WhatsApp Messenger (=3) = 13 Fathers

## ETHICS

University ethical approvals were obtained.

## EMERGING THEMES

| Dominant Theme | Sub Theme |
|---|---|
| 1. Potential Causes/Risk Factors | 1a. Prior trauma/stressful life events. |
| | 1b. Issues related to the transition to fatherhood. |
| 2. Symptoms | 2a. Recognition of own symptoms |
| | 2b. Others' perceptions of symptoms |
| | 2c. Psychological symptoms |
| | 2d. Physical symptoms |
| | 2e. Social Functioning |
| 3. Coping Mechanisms | 4a. Things that help |
| | 4b. Things that hinder |