

# Self-reported postpartum depressive symptoms up during pandemic

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There was a national increase in postpartum depressive symptoms (PDS)

that worsened over the course of a year following the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, according to a study published in the July issue of the *Journal of Psychiatric Research*.

Mira A. Bajaj, from the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine in Baltimore, and colleagues assessed changes in PDS during the COVID-19 pandemic. The analysis included responses from users of the Flo mobile health application who completed a survey about their mood within 90 days of giving birth (prepandemic: 159,478 women; pandemic period: 118,622 women).

The researchers found that U.S. national rates of PDS increased from 6.5 percent prepandemic to 6.9 percent during the pandemic, with significant worsening during the first year of the pandemic. There was a negative association between percent change in PDS across [states](#) and both COVID-19 deaths per 100,000 residents and the 2020 [unemployment rate](#) for women. Changes in PDS were not associated with COVID-19 cases per 100,000 residents, percent job loss, percent change in women's unemployment rate, or the percentage of population staying at home.

"There are several possible explanations for this pattern of state-level findings," the authors write. "One possibility is that in states where there was a higher death toll or women's unemployment rate, families spent more time together and the new mothers had greater access to their [support systems](#)."

Two authors disclosed financial ties to Flo Health.

**More information:** [Abstract/Full Text](#)

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