Transcript Details
This is a transcript of an educational program. Details about the program and additional media formats for the program are accessible by visiting: https://reachmd.com/programs/advances-in-womens-health/the-challenge-of-diagnosing-postpartum-depression/56560/

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The Challenge of Diagnosing Postpartum Depression

Announcer:
You're listening to *Advances in Women's Health* on ReachMD. On this episode, we'll hear from Dr. Susan Zink, who's a board-certified reproductive psychiatrist at EleMental Integrative Psychiatry in Linwood, New Jersey. She'll be discussing postpartum depression and the conditions that can be mistaken for it. Here's Dr. Zink now.

Dr. Zink:
Certainly, postpartum depression is very common, but there are a lot of things that can look like depression, for example, that aren't. Thyroid disorders are very common after pregnancy. Nutrient deficiencies and iron deficiency—all kinds of medical issues—can come up in the pregnancy and postpartum period. So it's really important to investigate and rule out other medical causes that might mimic the symptoms of postpartum depression.

Anxiety is also a very common symptom of postpartum depression, and so that postpartum depression sometimes can get missed because the presenting symptom looks more like really severe anxiety or really severe irritability—not always just sadness, which is what we classically think of when we think of depression.

When I am seeing a woman who's coming to me in my practice, I'm doing a very thorough evaluation. I'm asking about all of her symptoms, including her mood, her anxiety, whether there's irritability or what sometimes women call mom rage, where they just feel really irritable, uncharacteristically so, more than they've ever been. Are they able to sleep when the baby is sleeping? Do they feel hopeless, or do they feel like their babies would be better off without them? We're really getting at the whole picture of what's going on.

And also, I'm asking how well they're eating. Are they just grabbing crackers, or are they eating nutritious protein, fiber, nutrient-dense meals? This can certainly affect mood.

We're talking about what blood work we might want to do to rule out other conditions, and we're also talking about support, and how much sleep they're getting. All of these things are really important to diagnose postpartum depression itself, but also to consider other conditions that can look like postpartum depression.

Announcer:
That was Dr. Susan Zink talking about how to distinguish postpartum depression from conditions that mimic it. To access this and other episodes in our series, visit *Advances in Women's Health* on ReachMD.com, where you can Be Part of the Knowledge. Thanks for listening!

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