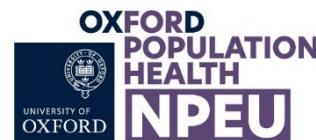


You & your Baby

A national survey of health and care during the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic



NIHR | Policy Research Unit
Maternal and neonatal
health and care



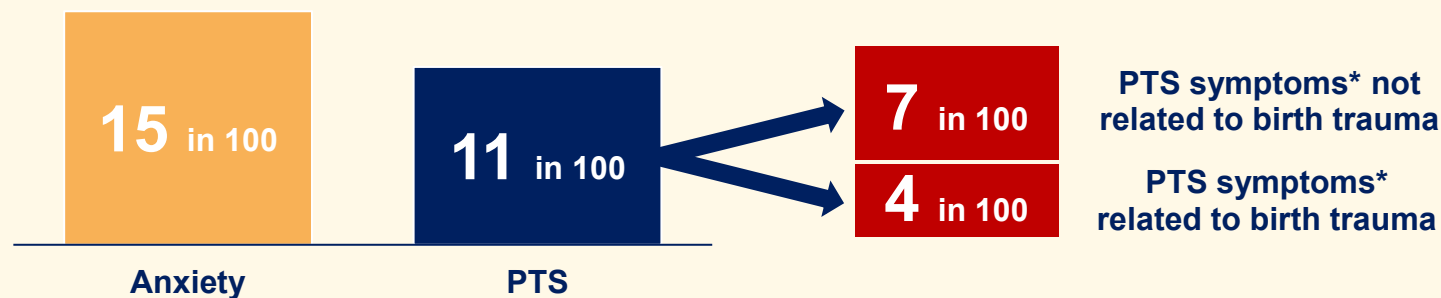
What was the impact of the pandemic on postnatal anxiety & post-traumatic stress?

What did we do?

Using survey data from before and during the Covid-19 pandemic, we compared the percentages of women who had symptoms of postnatal anxiety* and postnatal post-traumatic stress (PTS)* six months after giving birth in England. We also looked at the characteristics and maternity experiences of women who were more likely to have symptoms of postnatal anxiety* and postnatal PTS*. We included 9,120 women who took part in the surveys in 2018 and 2020.

What did we find?

During the pandemic, 15 in every 100 women had postnatal anxiety symptoms* and 11 in every 100 women had postnatal PTS symptoms*. More women had PTS symptoms* not related to birth trauma (7 in every 100) than related to birth trauma (4 in every 100).



How does this compare to before the pandemic?

The level of postnatal anxiety symptoms* was similar before and during the pandemic.

The level of postnatal PTS symptoms* was slightly higher during the pandemic, compared to before the pandemic.

The higher level of postnatal PTS symptoms* during the pandemic was because of an increase in PTS symptoms* related to birth trauma. There was no increase in PTS symptoms* not related to birth trauma.

In our surveys, women were more likely to have symptoms of postnatal anxiety* or postnatal PTS* six months after giving birth if they:

- were younger
- were born in the UK
- had a long-standing physical or mental health problem
- had anxiety during their pregnancy
- had less social support
- were less satisfied with their experience of childbirth

Levels of PTS symptoms* related to birth trauma were higher for women who gave birth during the Covid-19 pandemic which may have been due to the especially challenging circumstances.

The full article is available here: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/38574867/>

*Score above the cut-off on self-report measures