Anxiety Disorders & Obsessive Compulsive Disorder in Pregnancy

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Disclosures/Disclaimers/Acknowledgments

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- Julia Nardi Riddle, MD: None
- Lauren M. Osborne MD : None
- Julia Frew, MD: None





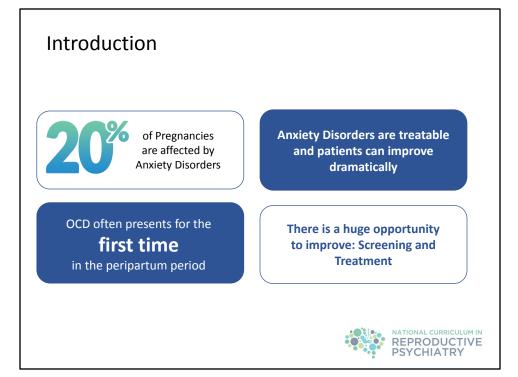
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- 5th objective: insert "knowing" when to refer to specialist
- AYM agree with above comments

Outline:

- Introduction
- Epidemiology
- Screening
- Clinical Criteria w/ examples
- Treatment
- Risks

-





Epidemiology: Prevalence				
	In Peripartum Period	In General Population (Lifetime)	Women in General Population (12 months)	
Any anxiety disorder	20.7%	31.1%	23.4%	
GAD	9%	5.7%	3.4%	
Panic Disorder	1-2%	4.7%	3.8%	
OCD	Pre: 0.2-7.8% Post: 2.3–16.9%	0.7 - 2.3%	1.8%	

Chapter 19 and 20 (APA book) NIMH Website: <u>https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/</u>



- In one study, 66% of postpartum women diagnosed with MDD were also diagnosed with an anxiety disorder (Wisner et al 2013)
- In another study, 50% of women with GAD has a comorbid diagnosis of major depression episode or another anxiety disorder

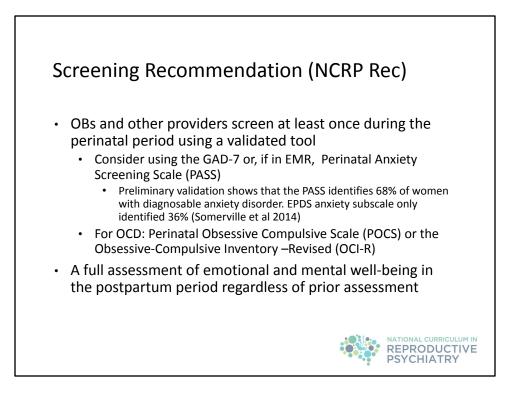
(Furtado et al. 2018). (Bayrampour et al. 2018; Biaggi, Conroy, Pawlby and Pariante 2016; Hantsoo and Epperson 2017; Hettema, Prescott and Kendler 2004; Mackintosh, Gatz, Wetherell and Pederson 2006).

Screening

- Because perinatal anxiety is often not discussed as its own phenomenon, it often goes underrecognized and underscreened
- EPDS, while good for depression, is not as helpful for identifying anxiety, though you can look at the subset of Questions #3-5 for a sense of elevated anxiety that requires further investigation
- PHQ-9 also does not identify anxiety

We can do better!





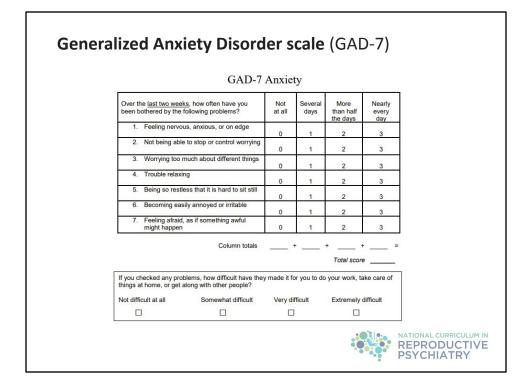
ACOG and APA have both made recommendation for perinatal depression screening, but there are no current recommendations or guidelines for perinatal anxiety/OCD screening. These recommendations are our own.

Löwe B, Decker O, Müller S, Brähler E, Schellberg D, Herzog W, Herzberg PY. Validation and standardization of the Generalized Anxiety Disorder Screener (GAD-7) in the general population. Med Care. 2008 Mar;46(3):266-74. doi: 10.1097/MLR.0b013e318160d093. PMID: 18388841.

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Lord C, Rieder A, Hall GB, Soares CN, Steiner M. Piloting the perinatal obsessive-compulsive scale (POCS): development and validation. J Anxiety Disord. 2011 Dec;25(8):1079-84. doi: 10.1016/j.janxdis.2011.07.005. Epub 2011 Jul 19. PMID: 21824744.

Foa EB, Huppert JD, Leiberg S, Langner R, Kichic R, Hajcak G, Salkovskis PM. The Obsessive-Compulsive Inventory: development and validation of a short version. Psychol Assess. 2002 Dec;14(4):485-96. PMID: 12501574.



Spitzer RL, Kroenke K, Williams JB, Löwe B. A brief measure for assessing generalized anxiety disorder: the GAD-7. *Arch Intern Med*. 2006;166(10):1092-1097.

Scoring GAD-7 Anxiety Severity

This is calculated by assigning scores of 0, 1, 2, and 3 to the response categories, respectively, of "not at all," "several days," "more than half the days," and "nearly every day." GAD-7 total score for the seven items ranges from 0 to 21.

0–4: minimal anxiety 5–9: mild anxiety 10–14: moderate anxiety 15–21: severe anxiety

Diagnostic Criteria: Key features

- Excessive or uncontrolled worry
- Duration: >1 month during peripartum

GAD

Excessive worry present majority of days

Functional impairment

Worries about a variety of topics that are difficult to control

Feeling keyed-up, mind blanking

Panic Disorder

Recurrent, unexpected panic attacks

Persistent worry about additional panic attacks and their consequences

Panic attack: Abrupt surge of intense fear/discomfort, along with physical symptoms of tachycardia, dizziness, fear of dying

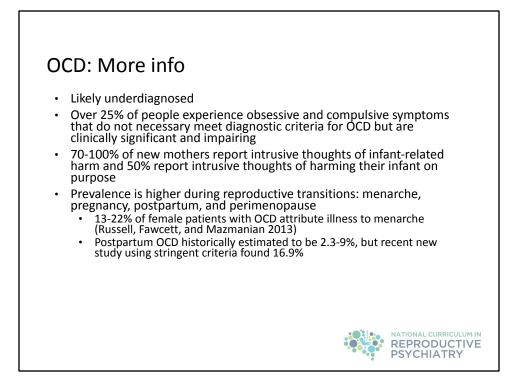
OCD

Presence of obsessions, compulsions or both

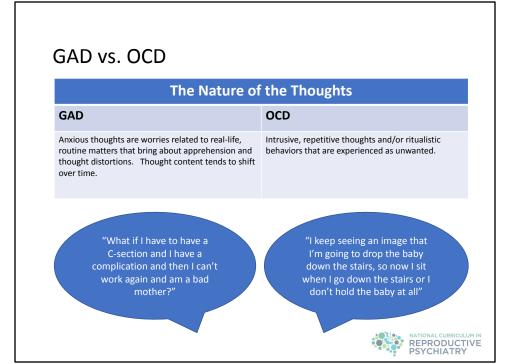
Recurrent/persistent thoughts, urges or images experiences as intrusive and unwanted

Compulsions are repetitive behaviors or mental acts that a patient is driven to perform in response to obsessions

REPRODUCTIVE



- (Furtado et al. 2018). (Bayrampour et al. 2018; Biaggi, Conroy, Pawlby and Pariante 2016; Hantsoo and Epperson 2017; Hettema, Prescott and Kendler 2004; Mackintosh, Gatz, Wetherell and Pederson 2006).
- 1. Fairbrother N, Woody SR. New mothers' thoughts of harm related to the newborn. Arch Womens Ment Health. 2008;11(3):221–9.
- 2. Abramowitz JS, Khandker M, Nelson CA, Deacon BJ, Rygwall R. The role of cognitive factors in the pathogenesis of obsessive-compulsive symptoms: a prospective study. Behav Res Ther. 2006;44(9):1361–74.
- Abramowitz JS, Nelson CA, Rygwall R, Khandker M. The cognitive mediation of obsessive-compulsive symptoms: a longitudinal study. J Anxiety Disord. 2007;21(1):91–104.
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Postpartum Psychosis vs. OCD

The Nature of the Thoughts

OCD

Postpartum Psychosis

More of a manic state with severe and dangerous delusions. Can include confusion or appear similar to delirium. This is a psychiatric emergency due to risk of suicide/infanticide

Delusional beliefs ego-syntonic: they are experienced without insight.

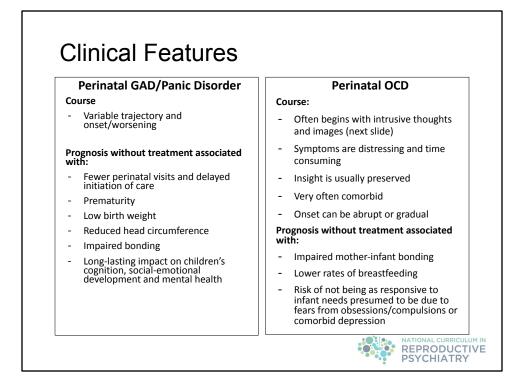
Mothers likely need urgent hospitalization and the baby needs to be in the care of someone else.

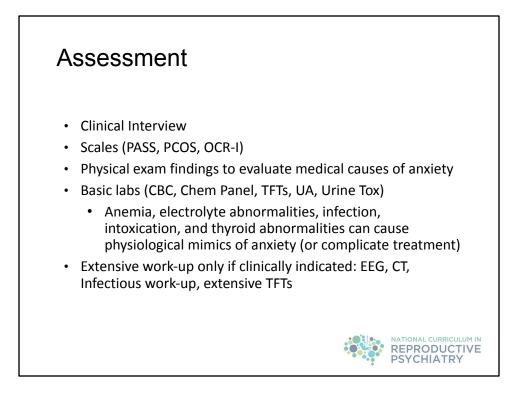
"I am on a special mission to save this baby and the only option is for her to go to heaven and be protected by God" These thoughts are ego-dystonic: extreme distress is experienced with the thoughts. They are unwanted and do not make sense.

It is not recommended to separate infants from their mothers but, instead, to pursue treatment and psychoeducation.

> "I keep having worries that she will roll over in her sleep, so I bought an Owlet and I sleep beside her bed so I can check on her every few minutes"

> > REPRODUCTIVE PSYCHIATRY





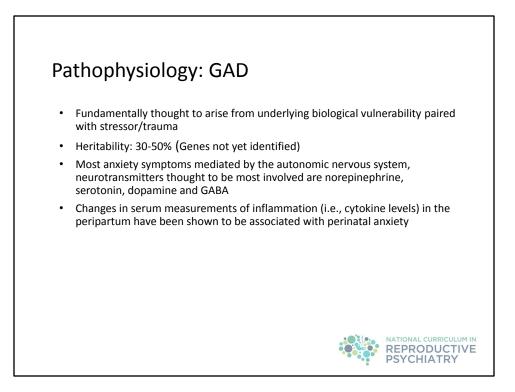




Physiological Symptoms: Mimics

- Physical symptoms may trigger feelings of anxiety/panic in some women
 - Normal physiology of pregnancy: elevated heart rate, shortness of breath
 - Thyroid dysfunction
 - Anemia
 - Preeclampsia
 - Pulmonary embolism
 - Cardiac arrhythmia
 - Asthma
 - Infection
 - Vitamin deficiencies
 - Autoimmune conditions





For more information:

Shimada-Sugimoto, M., Otowa, T., & Hettema, J. M. (2015). Genetics of anxiety disorders: Genetic epidemiological and molecular studies in humans. *Psychiatry and clinical neurosciences*, *69*(7), 388-401.

Domhardt, M., Geblein, H., von Rezori, R. E., & Baumeister, H. (2019). Internet-and mobile-based interventions for anxiety disorders: A meta-analytic review of intervention components. *Depression and anxiety*, *36*(3), 213-224.

Davis, M. (1998). Are different parts of the extended amygdala involved in fear versus anxiety?. *Biological psychiatry*, *44*(12), 1239-1247.

Chand, S. P., Marwaha, R., & Bender, R. M. (2022). Anxiety (nursing). In *StatPearls [Internet]*. StatPearls Publishing.

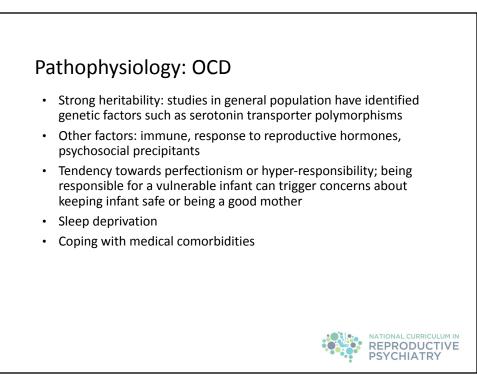
Furtado, M., Van Lieshout, R. J., Van Ameringen, M., Green, S. M., & Frey, B. N. (2019). Biological and psychosocial predictors of anxiety worsening in the postpartum period: A longitudinal study. *Journal of affective disorders*, *250*, 218-225.

Maes, M., Lin, A. H., Ombelet, W., Stevens, K., Kenis, G., De Jongh, R., ... & Bosmans, E. (2000). Immune activation in the early puerperium is related to postpartum anxiety and depressive symptoms. *Psychoneuroendocrinology*, *25*(2), 121-137.

Osborne, L. M., Yenokyan, G., Fei, K., Kraus, T., Moran, T., Monk, C., & Sperling, R. (2019). Innate immune activation and depressive and anxious symptoms across the peripartum: an exploratory study. *Psychoneuroendocrinology*, *99*, 80-86.

Infographic on Postpartum Harm Thoughts | The Perinatal Anxiety Research Lab

(ubc.ca)



Pathophysiology: Psychosocial Precipitants in GAD

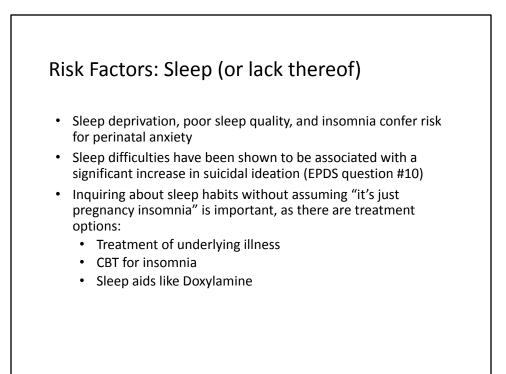
- Pregnancy complications
- Unexpected birth outcomes
- Previous traumatic events
- Transition in identity to motherhood
- Relationship stressors
- Low resources
- Poor employments/financial conditions
- Heavy family or household responsibilities
- Chronic stress from being a member of a discriminated against racial class



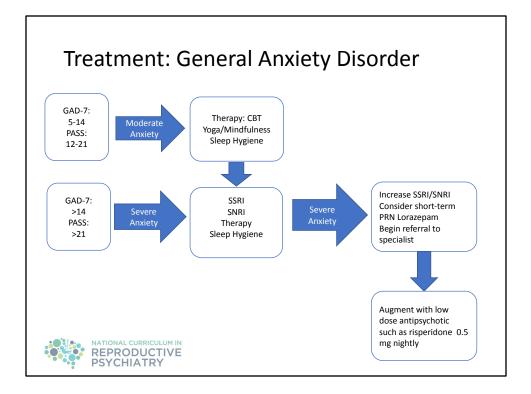
Pathophysiology: Psychosocial Precipitants in OCD

- Intense fear of harm coming to the baby
- Performing repetitive behaviors to protect the baby
- Sleep deprivation
- Coping with medical comorbidities

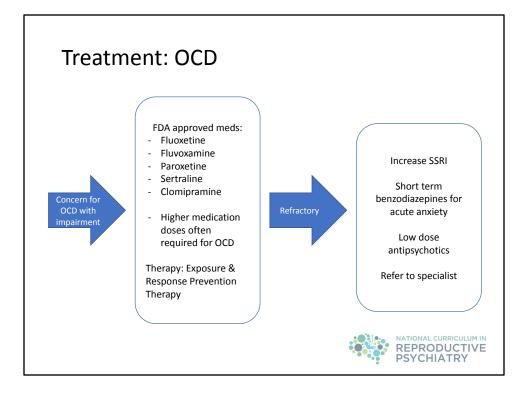




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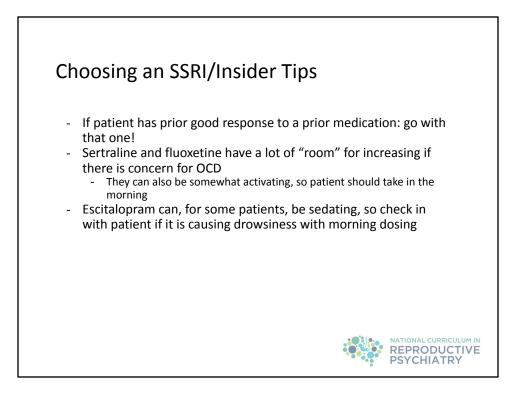
The GAD-7/PASS Scores here are estimates and meant to be general guidelines, not rules. Some patients, due a variety of reasons, may overestimate or minimize their symptoms burden.

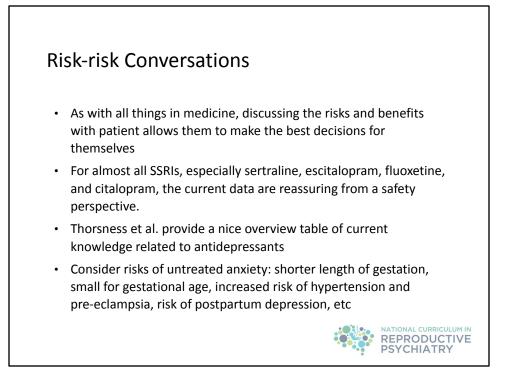


Dosages for common SSRIs

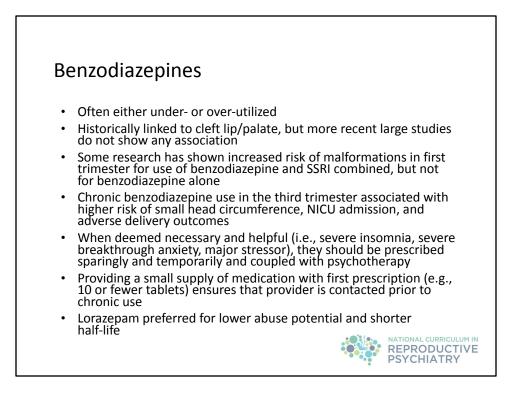
	Starting Dose (↓side effects)	Range often needed for GAD	Range often needed for OCD
Sertraline	25-50 mg	100-200 mg	200-400 mg
Fluoxetine	10 mg	20-80 mg	40-120 mg
Escitalopram	5-10 mg HS	20-40 mg	20-60 mg
Citalopram	10 mg	20-40 mg	20-80 mg
Fluvoxamine	50-100 mg HS		100-300 mg







• Thorsness, K. R., Watson, C., & LaRusso, E. M. (2018). Perinatal anxiety: approach to diagnosis and management in the obstetric setting. *American journal of obstetrics and gynecology*, *219*(4), 326-345.



Thorsness KR, Watson C, LaRusso EM. Perinatal anxiety: approach to diagnosis and

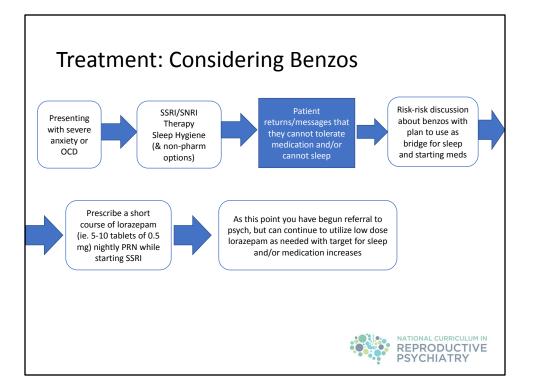
management in the obstetric setting. Am J Obstet Gynecol. 2018 Oct;219(4):326-345. doi:

10.1016/j.ajog.2018.05.017. Epub 2018 May 24. PMID: 29803818.

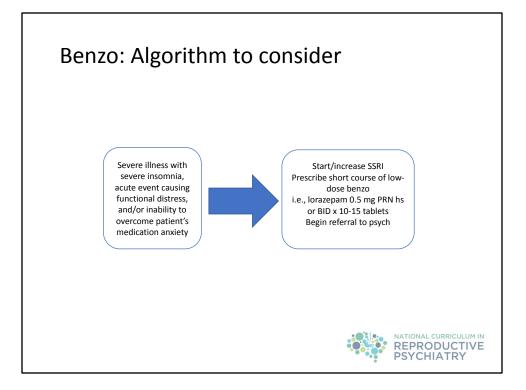
Benzodiazepines: Considerations				
Risks	When balancing risks of benzodiazepines (sedation, neonatal respiratory suppression with high continuous doses), remember to balance it against the risk of untreated severe anxiety			
Discontinuation	If benzodiazepines are not needed, taper slowly. Do not abruptly stop as this risks serious complications from withdrawal.			
Changing benzos	Though lorazepam is preferred, do not switch in a patient who is already taking an effective benzodiazepine. This would be an additional exposure to the fetus.			
Overnight care	Discuss a plan for infant care if patient is taking benzodiazepines for insomnia. The patient will need assistance as their alertness may be impaired.			
Psychiatric consultation	Consider referral if benzodiazepines are required for more than just a brief, short term treatment.			

PG/BH Comments:

- Somewhat confused by wording of "risks" section – ATTEMPTED TO FIX



Prescribing benzos can be a necessary step in abating anxiety enough to allow for initiation and titration of an SSRI. As is well known, we must be careful with the use of benzos due to addiction, tolerance, and diversion. As in all cases, using short purposeful prescriptions that are monitored can be a low risk way of bridging patients to better treatment (ie. high dose SSRI).



32F G2P1011 at 9w3d

- Initial visit,
 - EPDS: 10 GAD-7: 14
- Reports history of anxiety and postpartum depression
- On Zoloft 50 mg from prior pregnancy
- Was doing OK with therapy until pregnancy



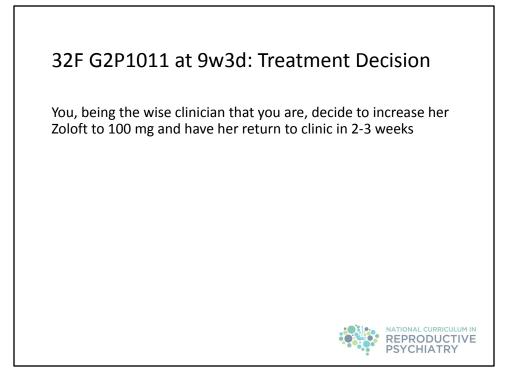
32F G2P1011 at 9w3d

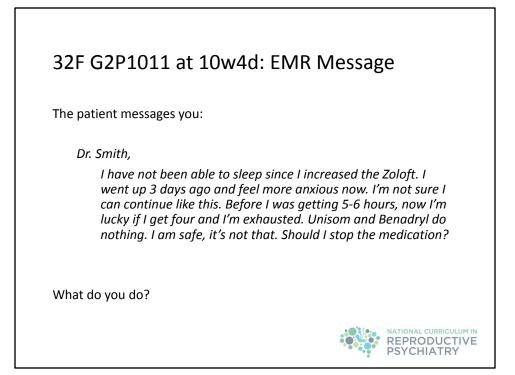
You do a RISK ASSESSMENT:

No history of suicide or suicidal thoughts. No thoughts now. No history of bipolar depression or manias.

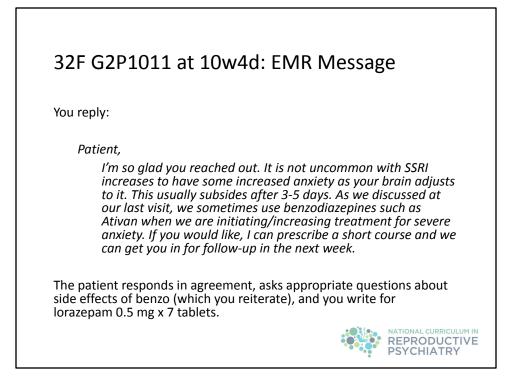
Describes anxiety around miscarrying, dealing with work, concerns about losing her job and about her other child. These have caused her to have trouble falling asleep and staying asleep. Breathing exercises and therapy help, but have become less effective.

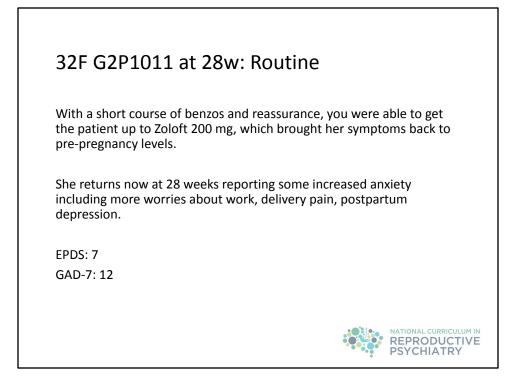


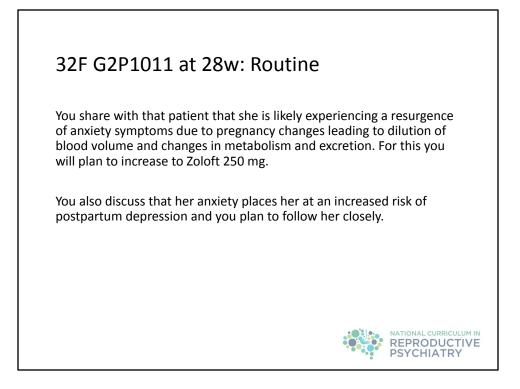


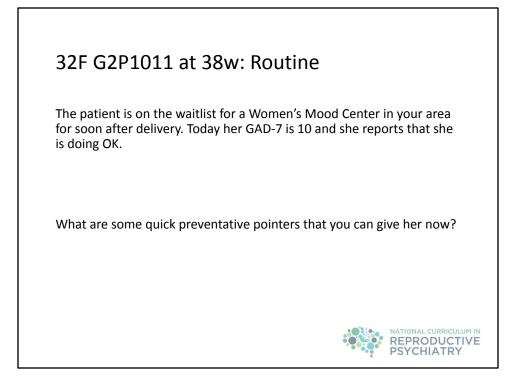


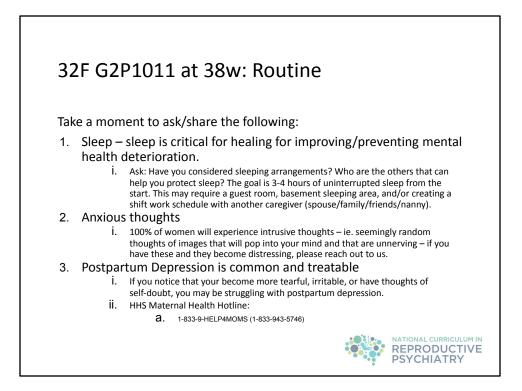
You have done a risk assessment so the sleep issues are less concerning for a budding mania. This fits a classic pattern in severe anxiety or both psychosomatic and biological response to increases in medication/serotonin.

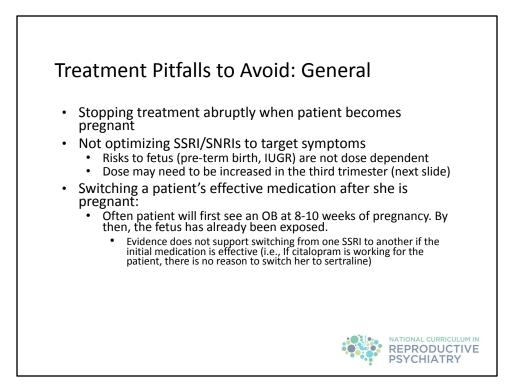


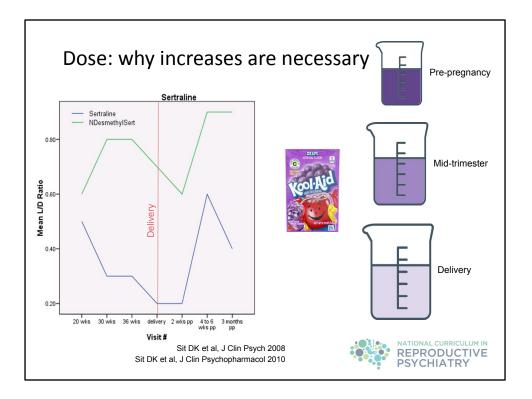












Graph of left demonstrates the mean level:dose ratio (Y axis) and the gestational age or weeks postpartum (X axis)

This graph is specific to sertraline, but similar graphs have been developed for many of the SSRIs. Note that the blue line is sertraline (active drug) and the green is N-desmethyl-sertraline which is the inactive metabolite

When prescribing SSRIs in pregnancy, it is useful to describe this. Consider the analogy of kool-aid being diluted in larger volumes of water to explain that often we need to increase the dose as pregnancy progresses to get the same therapeutic response. It also emphasizes how a dose increase is not more exposure to the fetus - it optimizes the chance of only one exposure (medication) and not two exposures (suboptimally treated MDD + medication).

Blood volume increases, changes in hepatic metabolism and renal clearance lead to increase dilution, metabolism, and excretion of SSRIs requiring increased doses as pregnancy progresses.

