

# Postpartum Depression

**T**he editors of *The Journal of Clinical Psychiatry* are excited to kick off a new series, *Focus on Women's Mental Health*. In the April *Journal*, Dr. Katherine Wisner discussed sex-based differences in her editorial, "Sex and Psychiatry in the Next 5 Years." Dr. Wisner articulated differences between men and women, as impacted by biology and environment, and the potential of future research to delineate important advances based on the incorporation of an understanding of sex and gender. In the current issue, we have selected peer-reviewed articles about postpartum depression to commence this new section.

Over the last several years, postpartum mental illness made grisly and sensational headlines across the United States in relation to the Andrea Yates case. Yates, who killed her children, was suffering from postpartum psychosis, a recurrent and perhaps preventable condition in her case. As a nation, we missed the opportunity to learn from this tragedy. Instead of broad leaps in psychoeducation and destigmatization and sweeping changes in screening and treatment of postpartum women, Yates was convicted of murder and the case was put behind us.

In this issue, we focus on postpartum depression because of its prevalence and serious consequences. The Yates case stands out because of its horror. In its wake, postpartum depression is often missed and left untreated. Families are affected deeply.

Most cases of postpartum mental illness are less sensational but tragic nonetheless. Untreated maternal depression has broad consequences that affect almost every aspect of child development. We focus on postpartum depression in this section in order to highlight its importance as a significant public health issue. We hope that this emphasis will increase awareness about this disorder.

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