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" Smile through It!" Keeping up the Facade While Suffering from Postnatal Depressive Symptoms and Feelings of Loss: Findings of a Qualitative Study

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study describes a research project in Norway comprising 15 mothers with postnatal depression and/or depressive symptoms and their experiences of loss in the early period following childbirth. During in-depth interviews, the mothers provided detailed descriptions of various loss subjects. Qualitative analysis revealed three global themes: loss of former identity, loss of self-reliance and lack of capacity for self-care. The analysis and discussions include perspectives from medicine and sociology. The descriptions may be valuable for health professionals' understanding and assessment of postnatal depressive symptoms in mothers. The findings may also help to bridge the gap between medicine and sociology; furthermore, the results demonstrate the importance of an interdisciplinary approach to this multifaceted and complex phenomenon.

KEYWORDS

Postnatal Depression; Loss; In-Depth Interviews; Qualitative Study; Primary Health Care Services; Interdisciplinary

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