

*National  
Organization of  
Mothers  
Of  
Twins  
Clubs, Inc.*

**RESEARCH REPORT # 67**

Subject: **Post Partum Depression and Mothers  
of Multiples**

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Date: July 2002 – January 2003

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this study was to obtain information regarding post-partum depression as it pertains to mothers of multiple birth children.

**METHOD:** A questionnaire was printed in the NOMOTC's Notebook. The target population included mothers of multiple birth children and respondents were instructed to complete the survey whether they experienced depression or not.

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**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

A total of 758 completed surveys were received and broken down as follows:

Type of multiples:	Twins	95 %	Triplets	4%	Other	1%
Zygoty:	Fraternal	60%	Identical	32%	Unsure	8%
Gender:	Male	32%	Female	32%	Both	36%
Difficulty conceiving:	Yes	47%	No	52%		
Fertility medications:	Yes	42%	No	57%		

The ages of the multiples ranged from 2 months to 48 years.

The majority of maternal age percentages were 31-35 (36%) and 36-40 (29%), with 46% of respondents reporting to be "stay at home moms" and 22% employed outside of the home. The majority of respondents (95%) reported being married.

63% of the respondents reported receiving outside assistance with housework/childcare after their multiples went home following hospital discharge, with the largest percentage (27%) receiving assistance for greater than 7 weeks.

**RESULTS:**

1. The majority of mothers (56%) denied experiencing depression lasting greater than 2 weeks following the birth of their multiples, while 37% confirmed that they did experience depression (compared to only 9% confirming depression following the birth of their singletons).
2. Of those respondents experiencing depression post-partum, 25% did seek professional help with the largest percentage (10%) receiving both medication and therapy.
3. 21% of mothers reported being depressed as adolescents.

4. 47% of respondents confirmed experiencing “baby blues” following the birth of their multiples (compared to only 18% experiencing the equivalent following the birth of their singletons).
5. Respondents reported a decline in their mate helpfulness/supportiveness from 83% during pregnancy to 66% at 1-5 years after pregnancy.
6. While 40% of respondents denied experiencing marital tensions, 35% of respondents confirmed such difficulties up to 1 year after birth of multiples.
7. A great majority of mothers of multiples reported not only having a greater share of responsibilities for childcare (85%), but for housework as well (81%).
8. Of the 42% of respondents who verified taking fertility medications in order to conceive, 21% had IVF, and 15% confirmed “other” method of conception (i.e. artificial insemination).
9. 60% of respondents reported that their multiples were their first children.
10. Although 56% of respondents denied feeling isolated, guilty or inadequate after the birth of their multiples, 43% did confirm having such feelings.
11. A large majority of mothers (70%) reported that joining a multiples club/support group was instrumental in helping maintain good mental health.

#### **CONCLUSION:**

While almost one-half of the respondents reported experiencing “baby blues”, just over one-third of mothers confirmed experiencing depression lasting longer than two weeks following the birth of their multiples. Of those respondents experiencing depression, only one-quarter sought professional help. Only 11% of health care professionals recommended joining a support group.

Despite reporting having a greater share of responsibilities for both childcare and housework, and a decline in mate helpfulness/supportiveness after pregnancy, the majority of respondents denied experiencing marital tensions/difficulties. The statistical significance of mothers reporting that their affiliation with a multiples club/support group was instrumental in helping to maintain good mental health most likely enhanced their ability to better cope with the extra responsibilities.