

# Patterns and factors associated with low adherence to psychotropic medications during pregnancy-a cross-sectional, multinational web-based study.

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## Abstract

**Background:** No previous studies have explored how closely women follow their psychotropic drug regimens during pregnancy. This study aimed to explore patterns of and factors associated with low adherence to psychotropic medication during pregnancy.

**Methods:** Multinational web-based study was performed in 18 countries in Europe, North America, and Australia. Uniform data collection was ensured via an electronic questionnaire. Pregnant women were eligible to participate. Adherence was measured via the 8-item Morisky Medication Adherence Scale (MMAS-8). The Beliefs about Prescribed Medicines Questionnaire (BMQ-specific), the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS), and a numeric rating scale were utilized to measure women's beliefs, depressive symptoms, and antidepressant risk perception, respectively. Participants reporting use of psychotropic medication during pregnancy (n = 160) were included in the analysis.

**Results:** On the basis of the MMAS-8, 78 of 160 women (48.8%, 95% CI: 41.1-56.4%) demonstrated low adherence during pregnancy. The rates of low adherence were 51.3% for medication for anxiety, 47.2% for depression, and 42.9% for other psychiatric disorders. Smoking during pregnancy, elevated antidepressant risk perception (risk $\geq$ 6), and depressive symptoms were associated with a significant 3.9-, 2.3-, and 2.5-fold increased likelihood of low medication adherence, respectively. Women on psychotropic polytherapy were less likely to demonstrate low adherence. The belief that the benefit of pharmacotherapy outweighed the risks positively correlated (r = .282) with higher medication adherence.

**Conclusions:** Approximately one of two pregnant women using psychotropic medication demonstrated low adherence in pregnancy. Life-style factors, risk perception, depressive symptoms, and individual beliefs are important factors related to adherence to psychotropic medication in pregnancy.

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