Correlates of Anxiety Symptoms during Pregnancy and Association with Perinatal Outcomes: A Meta-Analysis

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Objective: To identify correlates of anxiety symptoms during pregnancy and determine the strength of the relationship between anxiety symptoms and adverse perinatal outcomes.

Study Design: A meta-analytic review was conducted of studies that evaluated the relationship between self-reported anxiety symptoms during pregnancy and potential correlates or perinatal outcomes. Results: Fifty studies of 48 samples of women met inclusion criteria. Anxiety symptoms during pregnancy were associated with a number of psychosocial variables including depressive symptoms ($r = .66$), stress ($r = .40$), and self-esteem/self-worth ($r = -.47$). There were no significant associations of anxiety symptoms with perinatal outcomes (all $r_s < .19$). Conclusions: Anxiety symptoms during pregnancy appear to be associated with similar psychosocial variables as anxiety at other times. There is no evidence of an association of anxiety symptoms with adverse perinatal outcomes among those studied thus far. However, significant gaps still exist in the literature in this area.