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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN REFUSAL OF ANTENATAL SCREENING TEST AND MOTHER-FETUS ATTACHMENT

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BACKGROUND AND AIM: Mothers experience prenatal attachment by viewing the fetus as a distinct entity, resulting in meaningful emotional attachment. Antenatal screening test (AST) decisions shaped not only by emotional attachment but also by cognitive assessments, risk perception, socioeconomic status, and health literacy (1). We studied the relation between double/triple test (DTT) and oral glucose tolerance test (OGTT) uptake willingness and prenatal attachment, depression, and anxiety.

METHODS: Under ethical approval 2023/05-52, 112 pregnant women recommended for AST (mean age 28.32±5.99; mean gestational age 19.85±7.98) joined this study. Participants were administered Prenatal Attachment Inventory (PAI), Beck Depression Scale (BDS), Beck Anxiety Scale (BAS).

RESULTS: 57.1% of participants wanted to take the DTT, 33.9% wanted to take the OGTT. No significant correlations occurred between DTT/OGTT willingness and PAI, BDS, or BAS scores (p>0.05). PAI correlates weakly and negatively with BDS (r=-0.215; p=0.023). PAI weakly correlates with gestational age (r=0.216, p=0.022) and stillbirth rate (r=0.229, p=0.015). BDS scores correlate with duration of marriage (r=0.287, p=0.002), pregnancies (r=0.307, p=0.001), and child count (r=0.305, p=0.001).Willingness for DTT was higher among university graduates (p=0.022).

Sociodemographics didn't correlate with OGTT testing willingness. Higher family incomes (p=0.022) and university-educated spouses (p=0.015) predicted superior PAI scores. BAS scores were higher in those with extended families (p=0.016), those with poor relationships with their spouse's family (p=0.005), and those without knowledge of infant care (p=0.029).

CONCLUSIONS: The findings show that willingness to undergo AST is independent of the prenatal attachment level. This suggests that the decision to undergo testing may be related to cognitive and sociodemographic factors rather than emotional attachment (2,3). The negative relationship between prenatal bonding and depression supports the idea that depressive symptoms during pregnancy may weaken the bonding process, which is consistent with studies (4,5).

Keywords: Prenatal attachment, depression, anxiety