

Abstract:

Postpartum Symptoms after Antepartum Bed Rest*

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Objective: Antepartum bed rest treatment is associated with adverse side effects. Little is known however about postpartum recovery after bed rest treatment. This study determined the type and frequency of postpartum symptoms during recovery from antepartum bed rest treatment across six weeks postpartum.

Methods: This was a longitudinal repeated measures study. Antepartum hospitalization occurred in three perinatal tertiary care hospitals in two cities in the Midwest. The convenience sample consisted of 106 postpartum women who had a singleton high-risk pregnancy and were treated with antepartum bed rest. A Postpartum Symptom Checklist assessed physiologic and psychological symptoms.

Results: Women reported 12.5 symptoms at 2 days postpartum but symptoms rapidly declined at one week. Ninety-three percent of women reported a mean of 6.6 symptoms at six weeks postpartum. Symptoms that continued to be reported at six weeks by at least 40% of women were fatigue, mood changes, tenseness, difficulty concentrating, back muscle soreness, dry skin, and headache. Women who had a cesarean section reported significantly more symptoms than those who had a vaginal delivery ($p = .006$). Length of maternal bed rest was significantly correlated with the number of symptoms at postpartum weeks 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6.

Conclusion: Postpartum symptoms decreased across time but reveal an underlying morbidity that is not resolved by six weeks postpartum.

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