Background

- Postpartum depression (PPD) is a subdiagnosis of major depressive disorder and affects 10–20% of women after childbirth in the US.1

- While treatment patterns for major depressive disorder have been well-characterized, treatment patterns for PPD are not, even though antidepressants are recommended to treat both conditions.

- The objective of this study was to characterize the type, duration, and quantity of antidepressant therapies in patients with PPD.

Results

- The study cohort consisted of 46,346 patients. The median time from delivery to first PPD diagnosis was 44 days (interquartile range: 23 – 74 days) (Table 1).

- Among patients with PPD, 30,331/46,346 (65.4%) filled at least one antidepressant prescription in the 365 days after diagnosis.
  - No substantial differences in age, region, birth type, or insurance type were observed between patients who filled an antidepressant prescription and those who did not.

- The median time from PPD diagnosis to first antidepressant fill was 0 days (interquartile range: 0 – 15 days).

- While 49.3% of patients who filled an antidepressant prescription still had an active prescription 180 days after the first fill, 24.3% of patients had one fill in the database and no additional fills.

- In the 365 days after PPD diagnosis, 30.8% of antidepressant-treated patients received two or more distinct antidepressants, and 10.8% received three or more distinct antidepressants (Figure 1).

- Sertraline was the most filled first-line antidepressant (53.3%) (Figure 2).

- Later-line therapies were not dominated by any single antidepressant and consisted of 40 different medications over time (Figure 2).

- Sertraline was the most common first-line treatment, but no clear treatment choice was apparent if first-line treatment failed.

- Like major depression2, PPD treatment patterns appear to be characterized by antidepressant medication discontinuation and switching.

Conclusions

- PPD treatment patterns are heterogeneous.

- Among patients treated with antidepressants, about 1 in 4 filled only once, suggesting discontinuation.

- About 1 in 10 patients treated with antidepressants received 3 or more distinct medications in the year after diagnosis, suggesting that the initial medication prescribed was not effective.

Methods

- We conducted a descriptive analysis of a US-based open claims database (Symphony Health).

- Patients included had an ICD-10 code for delivery (Z37.x) from January 2016-December 2017 and for PPD (F53) within 180 days of delivery.

- Prescription fills of antidepressants and other medications used to treat depression in the 365 days after initial PPD diagnosis were used to characterize treatment patterns.

References