



THE RELATIONSHIP OF FAMILY SUPPORT TO THE MENTAL HEALTH OF POSTPARTUM PATIENTS

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ABSTRACT

Postpartum maternal mental health is a crucial aspect that significantly affects the well-being of both mother and infant. This period is often accompanied by physical, psychological, and social changes that may lead to depression, anxiety, and stress. If left unaddressed, these problems can interfere with mother–infant bonding, the quality of childcare, and the child's overall development. Family support, particularly from husbands, parents, and other household members, plays an important protective role by helping mothers adapt to their new role, reducing the risk of psychological problems, and strengthening maternal confidence in caring for the baby. This study aims to examine the relationship between family support and postpartum maternal mental health through a systematic literature review based on the PRISMA framework, covering publications from 2020 to 2025. From an initial total of 1,435 articles, 13 met the eligibility criteria and were included in the analysis. The analysis indicates that mothers with strong family support tend to have more stable mental health, whereas insufficient support increases vulnerability to depression and anxiety. In conclusion, family support has a significant influence on maintaining maternal mental health after childbirth. Therefore, family-based interventions should become a central focus in nursing and midwifery practice to enhance the quality of life of both mothers and infants.

Keywords: family support; mental health; postpartum

How to cite (in APA style)

Ardani, D. K., & Rahayuningsih, F. B. (2026). The Relationship of Family Support to the Mental Health of Postpartum Patients. *Indonesian Journal of Global Health Research*, 7(6), 1117–1126. <https://doi.org/10.37287/ijghr.v7i6.550>.

INTRODUCTION

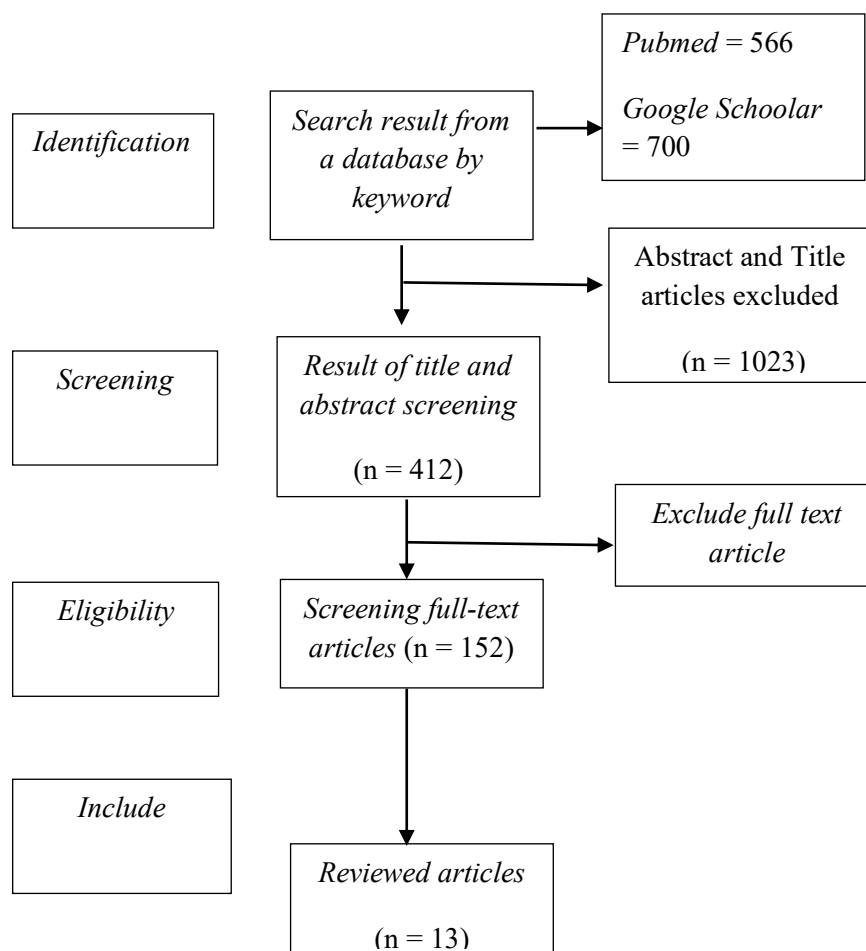
The postpartum period is a crucial period in a mother's life, because in addition to experiencing physiological changes, there are also significant psychological and social challenges. Hormonal changes that occur after childbirth often trigger emotional instability, anxiety, and even depression. This condition, if not treated immediately, can have a bad impact, not only on the health of the mother, but also on the quality of parenting and child growth and development. (Sari, 2020). Postpartum depression is one of the most common mental health problems experienced by mothers after childbirth. Symptoms include prolonged feelings of sadness, loss of interest, irritability, and the appearance of a sense of inability to carry out the role of mother. This condition can interfere with the emotional bond between the mother and the baby and increase the risk of developmental disorders in the child. Therefore, efforts to prevent and treat postpartum depression are very important. (Ariyanti, 2020) Family support is one of the main protective factors in maintaining the mental health of postpartum mothers. This form of support can be in the form of emotional support, awards, information, or practical help provided by husbands, parents, or other family members. Research shows that mothers with adequate family support have a more stable psychological state, lower stress levels, and are more confident in babysitting. (Sulistyaningsih & Wijayanti, 2020)

In addition to postpartum depression, family support has also been shown to play a role in preventing the occurrence of postpartum blues. Mothers who receive full support from their families have a lower risk of experiencing emotional distress in the early weeks after giving birth. This support contributes to reducing stress, fostering a sense of security, and creating a more harmonious family atmosphere. (Nuraeni et al., 2023). Recent research even confirms that family support not

only lowers symptoms of depression, but is also closely related to an improvement in the overall mental health of mothers. This has a direct impact on the welfare of the mother, baby, and the quality of relationships in the family. Therefore, an understanding of the role of family support in postpartum maternal mental health is essential to be used as a basis in family-oriented nursing and midwifery interventions. (Mastarinda et al., 2023) (Risbiyanti et al., 2025) . This study aims to analyze the relationship between family support and postpartum maternal mental health, so that it can be a foundation in the development of effective intervention strategies to improve the quality of life of mothers and children.

METHOD

This study uses the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method with the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) approach. This approach was chosen to obtain a comprehensive picture of the relationship between family support and postpartum maternal mental health through a review of various scientific publications. Scientific articles were collected through searches on three main databases, namely PubMed, Google Scholar, and Scopus, using the keywords "family support", "postpartum", "postpartum depression", "postpartum blues", and "mental health". The search is focused on articles published in the 2020–2025 time frame, both in Indonesian and English. The inclusion criteria set include original research articles and reviews that discuss the relationship between family support and postpartum maternal mental health, available in full text, and according to the publication period. Articles that are not relevant to the topic, are not available in full text, or are in the form of opinions, editorials, and non-scientific reports, are excluded from the selection process.



Picture 1. Diagram PRISMA

Based on the initial search results, 1,435 articles were obtained. After screening titles and abstracts, as many as 1,023 articles were eliminated because they did not meet the inclusion criteria. Of the 412 articles that were further reviewed, 260 articles were excluded at the full-text assessment stage. Thus, 13 articles were obtained that met the criteria and were used as the main source in the analysis. Furthermore, each article was analyzed to identify the results of the study, the instruments used, as well as key conclusions related to family support and postpartum maternal mental health. The results of the analysis were then synthesized to gain a deeper understanding of the role of family support in reducing the risk of postpartum depression and postpartum blues.

RESULT

Based on the results of a literature search through three main databases, namely PubMed, Google Scholar, and Scopus with a publication range of 2020–2025, 1,435 articles were obtained. After going through the title and abstract screening stage, a total of 1,023 articles were eliminated because they were not relevant to the research topic. Furthermore, a total of 412 articles were further reviewed, and at the full text assessment stage, there were 260 articles that were excluded. Thus, only 13 articles met the inclusion criteria and were analyzed in more depth. The thirteen selected articles were then reviewed to identify the relationship between family support and postpartum maternal mental health. The analysis was carried out by examining the research objectives, methods, number of samples, instruments used, and the main results reported by each study. In general, the results show that family support has an important role in lowering the risk of postpartum depression, preventing the occurrence of postpartum blues, and reducing anxiety levels in postpartum mothers.

Table 1.
Literature Search Results

Research Title	Author/Year/Place	Research Objectives	Sample/Technique/Quantity	Instruments	Key Results
Relationship between family cohesion/adaptability and postpartum depressive symptoms: A single-center retrospective study	Zhang GR, Li PS, Jia YB (2023), The First Affiliated Hospital of Jinan University and Foshan Maternity & Child Healthcare Hospital	Examining the relationship between family cohesion/adaptability and postpartum depression symptoms	Retrospective, 1446 postpartum mothers at Foshan Maternity and Child Healthcare Hospital, April-Dec 2021 period	Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS), FACES II-CV (Olson)	Low family cohesion and adaptability significantly increase the risk of postpartum depression. Disengaged/separated on cohesion and rigid/structured on adaptability increase the risk of depression, while enmeshed/chaotic is protective
The mediating effect of family support in the relationship between socio-economic status and postpartum depressive symptoms	Xiao Y et al (2024), Community Health Service Centers Shanghai	Knowing the effects of family support mediation on the relationship of SES and postpartum depression	Cross-sectional, 1887 postpartum mothers <6 months, multistage probability from 45 RSIA health centers in Shanghai	DASS-D, Family Support Scale, SES (education, employment, income)	Family support fully mediated the effects of SES on postpartum depression. A more supportive family lowers the risk of depression despite low SES
Husband Support and Postpartum Depression	Annisa NH, Natalia O (2023), Maternity Clinic of Mrs. Nurhasanah Ungaran, Semarang	Explain the relationship between husband support and postpartum depression in mothers	Qualitative and quantitative, purposive, 50 postpartum mothers of early adulthood in Ungaran	Skala Dukungan Suami, Beck Depression Inventory	There was a very strong negative association between husband support and postpartum depression ($r = -0.842$; $p < 0.01$). The

						higher the husband's support, the lower the risk of depression
Relationship of Family Support and Self-Efficacy with Postpartum Depression among Postpartum Mothers	Pertiwi CE et al (2021), Kenjeran Health Center, Surabaya	Determine the relationship between family support, self-efficacy, and postpartum depression	Cross-sectional, consecutive sampling, 97 mothers in the working area of the Kenjeran Health Center	Sources of Social Support Scale, Perceived Maternal Self-Efficacy, EPDS	Family support and high self-efficacy lower the risk of postpartum depression (p=0.000; r=-0.364 for family support)	
The Influence of Family and Community Support Factors on Postpartum Depression on a Mother's Extreme Behavior	Meivita DN (2025), Case data in hospitals and the community in 2019-2024	Examining the role of family/community support in postpartum depression and maternal extreme behaviors	Case study and survey, 10 postpartum maternal respondents (some from hospital, real experience), period 3-36 months postpartum	Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS), Interview	40% of postpartum mothers experience depression and desire to harm themselves/children. Husband and family support play a big role in preventing extreme behavior	
Association between social support and postpartum depression	Cho H et al (2022), K-Stori Nationally Representative Random Sampling Korea	Examining the relationship between social support and PPD in Korean women in 1 year postpartum	Cross-sectional, stratified random sampling, 1,654 postpartum women 0–12 months in various Korean hospitals	EPDS (≥10 depression), Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS)	Low/moderate social support increases the odds of postpartum depression (aOR 2.73 and 1.78). The biggest effect on multipara, pregnancy loss, work, negative body image	
Effects of family relationship and social support on the mental health of Chinese postpartum women	Qi W et al (2022), Shijiazhuang Obstetrics and Gynecology Hospital	Analyzes the contribution of marital satisfaction, mother-in-law's attention, and social support to depression and postpartum sleep quality	Cross-sectional, 817 mothers 6 weeks postpartum, online survey of participants at Shijiazhuang Hospital	Marital Satisfaction Questionnaire, Perceived Caring MIL, Social Support Rating Scale, EPDS, PSQI	Marital satisfaction and in-laws' attention directly and indirectly affect postpartum depression (directly and via social support); Social support reduces depression and strengthens sleep quality	
Relationship between Family Social Support and Anxiety of Postpartum	Bila ZJS et al (2023), RSIA Kendangsari Surabaya	Determining the relationship between family support and postpartum anxiety	Cross-sectional, 94 postpartum mothers at RSIA Kendangsari Surabaya, consecutive sampling	Family Social Support Questionnaire, Postpartum Anxiety Scale (PSAS-RSF-C)	Good family support was negatively associated with postpartum anxiety (r=-0.48, p<0.001); The majority receive good family support and have mild anxiety	
Review of Husband and Family Support with the Incidence of Postpartum Depression in	Khotimah K et al (2025), Asia multi-country review	Detecting and mapping the role of husbands and families in postpartum depression in Asia	Scoping review; selection of 6 quantitative studies from Japan, Korea, Indonesia, China	Miscellaneous: EPDS, Multidimensional Scale, Interview, Regression (Study on	The support of her husband, nuclear family, in-laws, and other social factors greatly reduced the risk of postpartum depression. The	

Mothers in Asia				hospitals and communities)	quality of relationships is important, the role of the family should be the main concern
Social Support and Postpartum Depression in Javanese Mothers	Wiyanto BE, Ambarwari KD (2021), sampling in midwives/hospitals in the Salatiga area	Examining the relationship between social support and postpartum depression in Javanese mothers	Correlations, purposive 34 Javanese mothers 1–4 weeks postpartum, sampling at hospitals/midwives in the Salatiga area	EPDS, Postpartum Social Support Questionnaire (PSSQ)	No significant association was found between social support and postpartum depression ($r=0.138$, $p=0.219$) in Javanese mothers; Other factors such as personality and readiness are more dominant
Husband's Support for Postpartum Mothers (Study of The Mother with Vaginal Birth and Caesarea)	Vera RY, Faizah BR (2023), in the Working Area of the Kartasura Health Center	This study aims to find out the description of husband support for postpartum mothers with normal childbirth and cesarean section	Sampling was carried out purposively with a total sample of 54 postpartum mothers.	Data collection was conducted using a postpartum social support questionnaire (PSSQ) and analyzed using an Independent T test	In this study, a statistical value of $p = 0.952$ was obtained. The value of $\text{sig}(p) > (0.05)$ showed that there was no difference between the husband's support for the mother who gave birth normally and the husband's support for the mother who gave birth by cesarean section. The results of this study of 61 respondents found that all numerical characteristics did not show a relationship with husband support. Several categorical characteristics such as village, occupation, profession, and intention to conceive show significant value to the husband's support.
Husband's Support for Postpartum Mothers: A Correlation Study Between Characteristics and Husband's Support For Postpartum Mothers	Friska FKAS, Faizah BR (2022), in the Working Area of the Kartasura Health Center	To find out the description of the husband's support for postpartum mothers in the Kartasura Health Center area.	The sample in this study is postpartum mothers in the working area of the Kartasura Health Center. Sampling was carried out using purposive sampling techniques and respondents were obtained as many as 61 respondents who gave birth from August 28, 2022 to October 15, 2022 in the	This study uses a quantitative descriptive research method with a cross-sectional approach. The variable in this study is husband support. The measuring tool in this study using a questionnaire	

Parental and In-Laws Support: Correlation Study of Characteristics in Postpartum Mothers	Fadila A, Faizah BR (2022), in the working area of the Kartasura Health Center, Sukoharjo Regency.	To describe the support of parents and in-laws, as well as to find out the characteristic relationship with parental and in-laws support for postpartum mothers.	This type of research uses a quantitative descriptive method. In this study, data collection was used a social support questionnaire by measuring the support of parents and in-laws. The respondents obtained for this study amounted to 61 postpartum mothers. Samples were taken by purposive sampling technique.	Kartasura Health Center Working Area.	e used in this study is PSSQ (Postpartum Social Support Questionnaire) which consists of 16 questions from Hopkins and Campbell (2008) which have been translated into Indonesian. The questionnaire used in this study was Miller's Postpartum Social Support Questionnaire (PSSQ) which consisted of 20 questions about parental and in-laws support. The questionnaire has been tested for validity and reliability, and the result is that 19 valid questions and one invalid question are eliminated.	In this study, it can be explained that support from parents is more often given to postpartum mothers. This can happen because respondents contact their biological parents more often than they do with their in-laws. Most respondents live more with their family of origin and husband than live with their in-laws. Some characteristics in this study did not show significant results or had a weak relationship with parental and in-law support. Only the categorical characteristics of work towards parental support showed a significant relationship between job characteristics and parental support because the result of the P value showed a value of $p = 0.047$.
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DISCUSSION

The results of this systematic literature review consistently demonstrate that family support is a critical determinant of mental health among postpartum mothers. Across the thirteen reviewed studies, families especially husbands emerged as pivotal sources of emotional stability, instrumental assistance, and psychological resilience during the postpartum period. Family support not only alleviates symptoms of postpartum depression but also plays a central role in preventing postpartum blues and reducing maternal anxiety levels. The findings collectively emphasize that effective support systems shape positive maternal outcomes, not merely through practical help but also by fostering a nurturing emotional environment that promotes maternal adjustment. (Nuraeni et al., 2023)

Research by Zhang et al. (2023) revealed that low family cohesion and adaptability significantly increase the risk of postpartum depression. This indicates that dysfunctional family structures rigid, disengaged, or poorly adaptable can amplify psychological distress in new mothers. Conversely, cohesive families with flexible dynamics offer a protective space for emotional recovery. In addition, the findings by Xiao et al. (2024) expand this understanding by showing that family support can *mediate* the impact of socioeconomic disparities on maternal mental health. Despite limited financial or educational resources, mothers who perceive strong family support tend to experience fewer depressive symptoms. This suggests that the social and emotional environment within a household may buffer against the negative effects of economic hardship, highlighting the multidimensional protective value of familial relationships.

In line with these findings, Annisa & Natalia (2023) and Pertiwi et al. (2021) found that husband support has a robust negative correlation with postpartum depression. Emotional validation, shared parenting responsibilities, and open communication from partners enhance the mother's sense of safety and belonging, which in turn mitigates feelings of inadequacy or stress. These studies also emphasize the synergistic effect between external support and internal coping resources—specifically, that confidence (self-efficacy) and perceived family support operate together to reduce vulnerability to postpartum psychological problems.

Further evidence from Meivita (2025) and Cho et al. (2022) underscores the intersection between poor family support and extreme behavioral outcomes such as self-harm and thoughts of harming the infant. Their data revealed that around 40% of mothers exhibiting such tendencies were those who lacked sufficient familial empathy or partner involvement. These findings elevate the importance of early mental health screening and family counseling within postpartum care frameworks. In addition, Cho et al. (2022) identified that women with weaker social ties, previous pregnancy loss, or workplace stress were more prone to postpartum depression, pointing to a broader psychosocial context that health professionals must evaluate when designing interventions.

Family support not only decreases the risk of postpartum depression, but it also reduces the likelihood of postpartum blues, a condition often considered transient yet impactful if unaddressed. Studies by Salat (2021), Naharani et al. (2023), and Nuraeni et al. (2023) illustrate that mothers who receive strong emotional and informational support from their families exhibit greater emotional stability during the first weeks after childbirth. Moreover, open communication, positive reinforcement from spouses, and the involvement of extended family members significantly promote maternal self-acceptance and coping capacities.

Another vital aspect highlighted in the literature is the role of family support among mothers delivering via cesarean section (C-section). According to Anita et al. (2024), the physical discomfort and longer recovery period often experienced by C-section mothers can exacerbate emotional vulnerability. In such cases, active family involvement through help with baby care, household chores, and moral encouragement accelerates psychological adaptation and physical healing. This finding underscores that family support extends beyond emotional influence and plays a direct role in physical recovery as well.

Interestingly, some studies, such as Vera and Faizah (2023), found no statistically significant correlation between family support and postpartum depression in certain cultural contexts, such as Javanese mothers. These results may stem from differences in sociocultural expectations, personality types, and readiness for motherhood, which suggests the presence of contextual moderators influencing the relationship between support and mental health. This variation indicates that intervention programs should be culturally responsive, accommodating social norms, familial structures, and communication styles unique to each cultural group.

Collectively, the synthesis of all reviewed studies supports a comprehensive conceptual model: family support acts as both a direct and indirect determinant of maternal mental health by reinforcing emotional security, encouraging positive self-appraisal, and providing concrete help during the postpartum transition. It mitigates stress, reduces the onset of psychiatric symptoms, and strengthens mother-infant bonding the cornerstone of early childhood development. Therefore, integrating family-centered strategies into midwifery and nursing practices becomes imperative. Interventions such as partner education, family counseling, peer-support networks, and postpartum home visits should be institutionalized as part of maternal and child health programs.

From a public health perspective, these findings advocate for a paradigm shift from mother-focused care to family-inclusive mental health promotion. Training health professionals to assess family functioning, teaching coping strategies to spouses, and fostering open communication among household members can substantially lower the incidence of postpartum mental disorders. Moreover, at the policy level, community health services should encourage awareness campaigns emphasizing the importance of family involvement in maternal well-being.

In summary, this review reaffirms that strong, consistent, and empathetic family support serves as a protective pillar for postpartum mental health. Emotional encouragement, shared responsibilities, and affirmation from close family members particularly husbands create a psychological buffer that stabilizes mothers during the vulnerable postpartum transition. Future research should further explore longitudinal effects of family-based interventions and examine how digital or community-based support platforms can complement traditional forms of familial care.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of a systematic review of the thirteen articles analyzed, it can be concluded that family support has a very important role in maintaining the mental health of postpartum mothers. The support provided, whether in the form of emotions, information, rewards, or practical help, has been shown to reduce the risk of postpartum depression, reduce the incidence of postpartum blues in the early weeks after childbirth, and reduce anxiety levels while strengthening the mother's confidence in caring for the baby. The results of international research show that cohesion, adaptability, and family support are able to reduce the negative impact of external risk factors, including low socioeconomic conditions.

Meanwhile, research in Indonesia shows that the support of the husband and the nuclear family plays a big role in maintaining the emotional stability of the mother, and can even prevent the appearance of extreme behavior in mothers with symptoms of severe depression. Overall, these findings confirm that family support is a key protective factor that not only affects psychological aspects, but also supports physical recovery and strengthens mother-child bonds. Therefore, family-based health interventions need to receive serious attention in midwifery and nursing practices to ensure that the mental health of postpartum mothers is maintained, which can ultimately improve the quality of life of mothers, babies, and families as a whole. mechanical ventilation installed in the ICU Room.

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