

# **The Effect of Exercise on Postpartum Depression and Stress in Pregnant Women: A Clinical Trial Study**

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## **ABSTRACT:**

**Introduction:** Pregnancy and postpartum periods are considered as the most sensitive period in women's lives.

This period is also important psychologically and socially in addition to its physical importance. Postpartum depression is one of the most common psychological disorders that are resistant and serious which affects pregnant women. The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of exercise training on postpartum anxiety and depression in pregnant women who referred to women's clinic in the city of Jahrom.

**Material and Method:** This research is a clinical trial study conducted on 102 pregnant women (51 in case group and 51 in control group). The instruments used included Edinburgh Postpartum Depression Scale and Spielberger State-Trait Anxiety Inventory. To analyze the data, T-test was used to compare the groups and the t-pair was used to compare the effects of the training before and after the study.

**Results:** There was no significant difference in demographic characteristics between the two groups. After exercise trainings, the study group showed a significant decrease in postpartum depression ( $p = 0.02$ ). Also, obvious anxiety decreased significantly from  $49.55 \pm 4.28$  to  $47.46$  ( $P < 0.0001$ ); the hidden anxiety was also decreased from  $50.21 \pm 4.34$  to  $47.46 \pm 3.57$  ( $p = 0.001$ ).

**Conclusion:** The results of 8 weeks of aerobic exercises showed an impact and decreasing effect on the levels of depression and anxiety and stress in postpartum women. Therefore, care providers of pregnant women should consider exercise as a promotion of mental and psychological health of women.

**Keywords:** Exercise, Postpartum Depression, Pregnant Women