**CRITICALLY EVALUATING THE COUNSELLING, AS WELL AS THERAPY SERVICES TO REDUCE THE IMPACT OF POOR MENTAL HEALTH ON THE IMMUNE SYSTEM OF PREGNANT WOMEN: A CASE STUDY OF NHS**

**Abstract**

The study has mainly focused on the services of NHS to decrease the poor mental health issues and its impact on the pregnant women. This proposal has delivered a brief methodological description to provide a clear idea about the research process. A timeline has also been attached to deliver an idea of overall time bound of the research. NHS has been focused on mental health developmental activities for pregnant women so that they can avoid anxiety and mental disorder issues. In that case, HBM and SCT theories have been incorporated in terms of managing therapy and counselling practices for those care seekers.

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# Introduction

## The main section of Proposal

Pregnant women have faced some issues of poor mental health as physical conditions were also affected. This research proposal has identified the impact of regular counselling and therapy to minimise poor mental health issues of pregnant women in the UK. NHS has taken initiative to minimise poor mental health issues among pregnant women. Depression and anxiety are the most common mental health issues faced by pregnant women. NHS has tried to mitigate the issue by conducting ***PATH (Perinatal Mental Health)*** (Ncbi.nlm.nih.gov, 2023)***.*** Using this strategy, the organisation has tried to provide a good quality of life to the patients and their families. Pregnant women have faced the issue most during this global pandemic situation for lack of mind-refreshing activities.

## Summary of problem

The problem of poor mental health of pregnant women can affect the future generation. The public health sector of the UK, NHS has taken the important initiative to provide a depression-free life to pregnant women. Based on the opinion of Filippetti, Clarke & Rigato (2022), in the covid-19 pandemic situation, the anxiety rate among women has increased and 40% of women have the symptoms of depression. Focusing on the present vulnerable situation of mental health issues of the UK pregnant women, NHS has tried to mitigate the issue with effective processes. The issues of mental health can be rectified by delivering mental support to the patient. Focusing on pregnant women, have already faced some physical problems during pregnancy. Family issues and excessive work pressure are other reasons to increase mental health issues. NHS has faced some issues to deliver counselling and relevant therapies to patients; those have also been managed by analysing risks and suggesting some mitigation strategies.

## The uniqueness of the research or research significance

The research about poor mental health problems of pregnant women has continued focusing on the urban area as rural individuals have faced fewer mental health issues than the urban population. The actual issue of this study is to increase the poor mental health rate among pregnant women. According to the words of Ahmad & Vismara (2021), pregnant women have faced both physical and mental issues, which have increased their depression and anxiety level. It is a big issue as the poor mental health of a pregnant woman has put an impact on the future generation.

At present, NHS has taken the initiative of the PATH (Perinatal Mental Health) program to conduct therapy for poor mental health problems. The depression and anxiety issues of pregnant women can be minimised by conducting more effective solutions, such as different types of mental health programs and providing mental support to the victims. In the views of Nath et al. (2019), a significant psychological change has been found among all pregnant women. Mainly the urban population are affected by this issue mostly as excessive stress from family issues and work pressure is the main reason for depression. Minimising the challenge, the study has recommended some strategic solutions to the NHS to deliver more efficient counselling to patients.

# Literature review

## A concept related to counselling to deal with the adverse impact of poor mental health on the immune system during pregnancy

Many pregnant women face mental health issues during pregnancy, such as anxiety, distress, and many other issues. Many pregnant women try to commit suicide due to their mental health issues which cause family problems. According to Sapkota *et al.* (2022), psychotic mood swings, mental disorders, and suicidal aspects can be found among pregnant women. These stressful activities negatively impact their immune system due to having a lack of healthy food consumption and medication insufficiency. On the contrary, Howard & Khalifeh (2020) argued that stressful situations affect pregnant women and they become hopeless and lose self-efficacy during pregnancy. In that case, the NHS is effectively providing counselling and therapy services so that they can get rid of the mental health issues to avoid mental health issues.

## Analysis of the effectiveness of therapy and counselling services of NHS to develop mental health issues

NHS provides mental health developmental facilities to all care seekers. However, they targeted pregnant women because this gestation period is not always helping to control the minds of all women. Contextually, Canfield *et al.* (2021) stated that the NHS provides therapeutic services to pregnant women so that they can establish a good relationship with these care seekers. This therapy service helps them to change negative attitudes, and build strong mindsets. In contrast, Bridle *et al.* (2022) argued that the NHS proposed a “*perinatal psychologist*” in terms of managing mental developmental activities and counselling activities so that pregnant women feel free to share their personal issues to address anxiety, distress and other relevant issues. However, the impact of this therapy influences all pregnant women which resolves their mental health with good relationship establishment.

## Identification of relevant challenges that are faced by NHS to deliver therapy services to pregnant women to reduce mental health

Currently, a lack of awareness can be found in the mental health service organisation so they failed to provide services to care seekers. According to Camm-Crosbie *et al.* (2019), inappropriate mental health treatment increases stressful situations among care seekers. However, the NHS needs to focus on this challenge because a lack of interaction among pregnant women can cause communication issues. As a result, they can feel awkward sharing their problems. On the contrary, Zhou *et al.* (2020) contended that a lack of implementation of telehealth services for mental health care seekers can increase communication issues among mental health experts and care seekers. In that case, the NHS has to adapt telehealth services for counselling purposes. In that case, pregnant women can easily interact with health experts who cannot visit healthcare organisations.

## Evaluation of strategic solutions to NHS to decelerate challenges in counselling and therapy services

The implementation of ICT technology can enhance the interaction process with all pregnant women. According to Courtenay & Perera (2020), the use of the online communication process can help to interact with care seekers so that they can share their confidential information to reduce mental health. In that case, Intellectual property needs to be incorporated to keep all data private. On the contrary, Riffel & Chen (2020) disputed behavioural aspects are needed to be managed in terms of knowing the mental condition of care seekers. Psychotherapy practices are needed to be strong in the NHS organisation so that they can improve awareness of mental health issues for pregnant women.

## Theoretical analysis

Health workers need to spread awareness of mental and physical health conditions in terms of managing all care seekers. In context, Anuar *et al.* (2020) stated that the “***Health Belief Model (HBM)***” helps to enhance the behavioural aspects of health workers so that they can easily communicate with care seekers to provide effective health services and spread awareness among care seekers. In contrast, Beauchamp *et al.* (2019) critiqued that “***Social Cognitive Theory*** '' helps to manage the healthcare systems in terms of providing services for care seekers. Additionally, it determines and motivates to improve physical and mental health conditions by using suitable healthcare management frameworks to support social awareness. These theories can be implemented in the NHS organisation in terms of developing counselling and therapy services for pregnant women to improve their mental; health and immune systems.

## Literature gap

This study has focused on pregnant women’s mental health conditions and their immune systems. However, many children and adults are also facing mental health problems; however, this study has not focused on adults' and children’s mental health conditions. This is a major gap in this research.

## Conceptual framework

**The Impact Of Poor Mental Health On The Immune System Of Pregnant Women**

**The Counselling as Well as Therapy Services To Reduce The Impact Of Poor Mental Health of pregnant women**

A concept related to counselling to deal with the adverse impact of poor mental health on the immune system during pregnancy

Analysis of the effectiveness of therapy and counselling services of NHS to develop mental health issues

Identification of relevant challenges that are faced by NHS to deliver therapy services to pregnant women to reduce mental health

Evaluation of strategic solutions to NHS to decelerate challenges in counselling and therapy services

Theories

Health Belief Model (HBM)

Social Cognitive Theory

**Figure 1: Conceptual framework**

(Source: Created by Author)

# Methodology

## Aim and Objectives

***Aim***

The aim of this study is to evaluate the impact of counselling and therapy services to reduce the impact of poor mental health on the immune system of pregnant women focusing on the case study of the National Health Service (NHS).

***Objectives***

* To discuss the concept to deal with the adverse impact of poor mental health on the immune system during pregnancy
* To analyse the effectiveness of counselling, as well as therapy services of NHS in developing poor mental health of pregnant women
* To identify the main issues faced by NHS to deliver therapy services to pregnant women for reducing mental health issues
* To evaluate some effective solutions to NHS to minimise challenges in the counselling process

## Detailing of the objective achievement process

### Data collection

The study will follow the ***primary data collection process*** by conducting an interview with 3 medical practitioners to collect relevant data about the topic. In the opinion of Agung & Darma (2019), primary data collection has assisted to collect recent data from relevant sources by conducting surveys or interviews. The researcher of this study has made a questionnaire with 3 questions to interview 3 medical practitioners of the NHS. Present issues of therapy services of NHS have been collected by conducting a survey on the medical practitioners of this medical institute. In addition, a ***secondary qualitative data collection*** process has also been followed by this study to collect relevant data from the previous era.

### Analysis

The data analysis section will consist of primary qualitative data analysis and secondary qualitative data analysis processes. The researcher of this study will analyse the interview results by following ***narrative analysis*** to analyse collected primary data. However, the ***thematic analysis*** will be done by the researcher to analyse selected articles. Based on the opinion of Lemon & Hayes (2020), primary data analysis assists in identifying the results of recent data and secondary data analysis helps to measure previous situations. Focusing on these two factors, the researcher will follow a brief interview analysis by describing three different opinions of three medical practitioners of the NHS.

### Experiment design

There are two experiments, which will be done by the researcher to conduct the research successfully. The researcher will make a ***questionnaire consisting*** of ***3 questions*** related to the poor mental health issues of pregnant women. In the case of identifying vulnerable participants, the researcher will manage the issues by changing the participants. The potential participants of this study are efficient medical practitioners with sufficient knowledge about the counselling process to reduce mental health issues.

## Discussing the research methodology

### Research approach

The research approach will guide the researcher to complete the process in a structural method. The researcher of this study will follow a ***deductive research approach*** to apply theory to identify results. According to the words of Pearse (2019), the deductive research approach has suggested confirming or rejecting the research hypothesis by conducting an analysis using the existing theories. The researcher of this study will follow the research approach to analyse the impact and issues of counselling faced by NHS to deliver services for reducing mental health issues during pregnancy time. This research approach will guide the researcher to analyse relevant theories relating to the topic, by which the overall quality of the study will be developed. This study will not create a theory, for which the inductive research approach will not be followed in this study.

### Research strategy

The researcher will select the ***qualitative research*** strategy to conduct primary and secondary qualitative data collection and data analysis processes. According to the words of Malmqvist et al. (2019), the research strategy is an important factor in conducting research, by which, the researcher can designs the data collection and analysis process. Quantitative research design has not been followed by the researcher as the descriptive opinion of the medical practitioners is needed to complete the research. Applying qualitative research in this study, the researcher can conduct a brief analysis of the collected data.

The study will follow both primary and secondary research processes to conduct interview analysis and thematic analysis. As per the opinion of Newman & Gough (2020), the Primary research process has been conducted to collect recent data about the topic and secondary research has assisted to collect other information related to the topic. The study will follow the strategy to select both types of research to make the study more valuable. The researcher will conduct primary data collection and data analysis process by following the primary research process. In addition, a secondary research process has been followed to select relevant journals and analyse those with thematic analysis.

### Resources

The researcher will use an “interview questionnaire” to conduct the interview, which is one of the most important resources of this study. In addition, continuing the secondary data collection method, the researcher will select some relevant articles, which are measured as another resource of this study. In addition, the research needs a recorder to record the interviews of the medical practitioners. Interview browsing is an important factor for this study, for which, the researcher has to arrange the internet facility.

### Cost

| **Section** | **Cost** |
| --- | --- |
| Questionnaire formation | £21 |
| Recording cost | £65 |
| Internet cost | £47 |
| Others | £20 |
|  | £153 |

**Table 1: Cost of the research**

(Source: Created by author)

## Risks and ethical considerations

The researcher will maintain research ethics to complete the research by maintaining its authenticity. All the participants will be provided with relevant information about the research and participants will be asked to fill up the consent form. Their personal data will not be disclosed under any circumstances. The researcher will not disclose the interview recording to maintain the confidentiality of the study. In addition, the opinions of the medical practitioners will not be manipulated in this study. In the views of Nguyen & Dellaportas (2020), maintaining ethics in the research development process will make the research more valuable and increase its future acceptance. In the secondary data analysis process, the researcher will put ***authentic referencing*** in case of using actual data of the selected articles. The study will maintain authenticity in both primary and secondary research processes, which will increase its value.

## Expected outcome

The expected outcome can be positive to know the perception of the therapy and counselling activities that are provided by NHS organisations for pregnant women. Proper analysis has been done in the entire research by which mental health conditions of women can be understood through the interview session. Along with that, the NHS's therapy process will get to know the way they implement counselling procedures for mental health development activities. Two theories have been considered such as HBM and social cognitive theory. These theories help to improve the healthcare operations of all care seekers. This study has included primary and secondary data collection methods by which all data can be gathered from three participants. With the help of the interview session, current data can be obtained based on the mental health issues of pregnant women.

Two methodologies have been considered where the secondary method indicates online articles and websites to collect previous data. On the other hand, the primary method allows current data from 3 medical practitioners of the NHS so that the implication of therapy and counselling services can get to know based on mental health development.

# Conclusion

It can be concluded that the NHS provides better mental health care services for all pregnant women so that they can overcome anxiety, stress, and other relevant issues. In that case, the NHS needs to focus on telehealth and communication procedures in terms of supporting mental health developmental practices through counselling sessions. Many pregnant women committed suicide due to having mental health issues. This study has accepted secondary and primary qualitative data collection methods in order to manage the mental health conditions of all pregnant women.

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# Appendix: Time line

| **Tasks** | **Week 1** | **Week 2** | **Week 3** | **Week 4** | **Week 5** | **Week 6** | **Week 7** | **Week 8** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Establishing aims and objectives for the research** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Selecting appropriate design, approach and strategy for the research** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Designing questions for the interview** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Conducting interview** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Collecting secondary data** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Data analysis** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Deducting conclusions** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Documenting the results** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Prepare and submit the final research project** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

(Source: Created by author)