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## Lost in a nameless chaos-women's experiences of postpartum depression: a meta-ethnographic study

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Postpartum depression (PPD) is a common complication related to childbearing with an estimated prevalence of 10%-15%. The disorder is referred to as a major depressive episode with a postpartum onset (ICD-10) or with a peripartum onset (DSM-5). However, it is likely that this time frame should be broadened to include several months after birth. The aim of the study was to explore and synthesize qualitative empirical studies published between 2005 and 2016 that describe women's experiences of postpartum depression. A systematic literature search was conducted and ten qualitative studies were synthesized using Noblit and Hare's 7-step meta-ethnographical method. Four metaphors described women's experiences of postpartum depression: feeling trapped by reality, experiencing a nameless chaos, struggling to find a way out and being a normal but suffering person. The women expected the transition to motherhood to be a joyous experience. Instead, they found it painful, lonely and experienced losing themselves in a nameless chaos. Motherhood is challenged when women experience losing themselves due to depression rather than building a new identity as a mother. Such a situation causes chaos, shame, anxiety and isolation. When seeking professional help, it is essential that the woman is encountered with empathy and professional knowledge, rather than a pat on the back and an underestimation of her problems.

### Biography

Bente Dahl is an Associate Professor of Midwifery at the University College of Southeast Norway. She has more than 15 years of clinical experience in Nursing, Midwifery and Professional Development. Her research and teaching interests have focused on issues concerned with midwifery and women's reproductive health as well as qualitative methodology. Her Doctoral degree on the topic "Queer Challenges in Maternity Care" describes lesbian couples' maternity care experiences, and was carried out at the University of Bergen Norway.

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