


Commentary
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Women's Mental Health: Navigating Hormonal Changes, Social Expectations and Economic Factors

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Description

Women's mental health is a multifaceted field shaped by biological, psychological, and socio-cultural factors. Women experience mental health issues differently from men, influenced by hormonal changes, reproductive roles, and social expectations. Addressing these unique aspects is important for effective mental health care and support.

Biological influences

Biological influences include:

Hormonal fluctuations: Hormonal changes across a woman's lifespan significantly impact mental health. Puberty, menstruation, pregnancy, postpartum, perimenopause, and menopause all contribute to psychological well-being. For instance, Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder (PMDD) is a severe form of Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS) characterized by emotional and physical symptoms that can disrupt daily life.

Pregnancy and postpartum: Pregnancy involves significant hormonal, physical, and emotional changes. While many women experience joy, others may struggle with depression and anxiety. Postpartum depression affects approximately 10%-15% of new mothers, manifesting as severe mood swings, exhaustion, and feelings of inadequacy, highlighting the need for support during this vulnerable period.

Menopause: Menopause, marked by the end of menstrual cycles, brings about hormonal changes that can influence mood, anxiety levels, and cognitive functions. Women may experience mood swings, depression, and anxiety during this transition, necessitating comprehensive care to manage these symptoms.

Socio-cultural influences

Some of the socio-cultural influences in women include:

Gender roles and expectations: Traditional gender roles often place women in caregiving positions, influencing their mental health.

Societal expectations to fulfill roles as mothers, daughters, and wives can create pressure and stress, contributing to mental health issues. The changing dynamics of modern society, with increased participation of women in the workforce, add to these complexities, affecting mental well-being.

Stigma and access to care: Stigma surrounding mental health, particularly among women, can hinder the recognition and treatment of mental health issues. Fear of judgment and societal stigma often prevent women from seeking help. Improving awareness and reducing stigma through education and advocacy are essential to enhance access to mental health care for women.

Economic factors: Economic disparities and financial stress can exacerbate mental health issues in women. Women are more likely to experience poverty and economic instability, which can lead to increased rates of depression and anxiety. Addressing economic inequalities and providing financial support and resources are crucial for improving women's mental health outcomes.

Strategies for improvement

Major strategies for improvement are:

Education and awareness: Raising awareness about women's mental health issues through public education and advocacy is very important. Educating women about mental health, symptoms, and available resources can empower them to seek help and support.

Accessible mental health care: Improving access to mental health care for women through affordable services, community programs, and telehealth can make a significant difference. Ensuring that mental health services are available and accessible to all women, regardless of socioeconomic status, is essential for effective care.

Support systems: Building strong support systems, including family, friends, and community networks, can provide emotional support and practical assistance to women facing mental health challenges. Support groups and counseling services can also play an important role in providing a safe space for women to share their experiences and receive guidance.

Policy and advocacy: Advocating for policies that address women's mental health needs, including maternity leave, workplace accommodations, and funding for mental health programs, is essential. Policymakers must prioritize women's mental health to create a supportive environment that fosters mental well-being.

Conclusion

Women's mental health is shaped by a complex interplay of biological, psychological, and socio-cultural factors. Addressing these unique aspects through education, awareness, accessible care, and supportive policies is important for improving mental health outcomes for women. By recognizing and addressing the distinct mental health challenges faced by women, society can encourage a more inclusive and supportive environment for women's mental well-being.