

Seminar 6: **The development and initial validation of a screening scale for antenatal anxiety**

Author: Mr. **Andrea Sinesi**, PhD Fellow, University of Stirling

TITLE

The development and initial validation of a screening scale for antenatal anxiety

FUNDER

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CHIEF INVESTIGATOR

Andrea Sinesi, PhD Fellow - Nursing Midwifery and Allied Health Professions Research Unit, University of Stirling.

SUPERVISORS

Professor Helen Cheyne and Professor Margaret Maxwell - Nursing Midwifery and Allied Health Professions Research Unit, University of Stirling

Ronan O' Carroll, Professor of Psychology, University of Stirling

ABSTRACT

This study aims to develop and test a questionnaire to screen for anxiety in pregnancy. During pregnancy, a substantial minority (around one in seven) of women develop significant clinical anxiety that can have a negative effect on long-term health and wellbeing of mothers and babies. Many questionnaires are available to screen for postnatal depression, but recent reviews indicate that no reliable screening tools have been developed to distinguish between significant clinical anxiety and the normal anxieties and worries women may experience during pregnancy. Initially, a review of the literature has examined a range of existing anxiety measures. Involvement of women with experience of poor perinatal mental health and health professionals has further supported the development of this new screening scale. In order to test whether the new scale is an effective screening tool for anxiety in pregnancy, 200 women will be recruited from antenatal clinics in Glasgow and asked to complete the new scale and the questionnaire currently used by midwife to identify pregnant women experiencing anxiety. 60 of these women will also be assessed by a mental health specialist and we will compare how the new scale performs compared to expert assessment. A short and reliable questionnaire would be highly valuable, assisting midwives and other health professionals, to recognise when women would benefit from further support and appropriately targeting mental health interventions.