

The cost of untreated maternal depression

Background

Every year, more than 10,000 children are born and cared for in Minnesota by mothers with depression.

This brief estimates the potential two-generational annual economic costs of untreated maternal depression. Depressed mothers have more difficulties following pre-natal care, and may also engage in self-injurious behavior. Mothers with depression are more likely to miss days of work or be less productive while at work. Additionally, babies born to depressed mother are more likely to have low birth weight than the other babies and are at risk of delayed brain development; consequently, their academic performance and their own future economic productivity are hampered.

Estimated annual costs

The estimated two-generational *annual* economic cost of not treating one mother with maternal depression is \$22,647. The cost of not treating the mother is \$7,211; while the cost attributable to a child born to a depressed mother reaches \$15,323.

Total cost of not treating a depressed mother and her child	\$22,647
Cost of not treating mothers with depression	\$7,211
Lost income of mothers	\$945
Cost due to lost productivity of mothers	\$6,223
Costs associated with a child born to a depressed mother	\$15,323
Cost of treating low birth weight (LBW) babies	\$6,283
Cost of pre-term deliveries	\$1,130
Loss of future income of babies due to LBW	\$3,522
Loss of future income of babies due to delayed brain development	\$2,465
Loss of future income of babies due to death of LBW child	\$1,577
Cost to the justice system	\$120
Loss in tax revenues (mother and child)	\$383