Overview

1. Similarities between Recovery from an Eating Disorder and the Perinatal period
2. Markers of eating disorder recovery that are helpful to solidify prior to pregnancy
3. Media vs. actual experiences of having a mother’s body; transmission of body image dissatisfaction from mother to child
4. Postpartum bellies as doorways to transformation

Eating Disorders during Pregnancy

“Few studies have investigated the prevalence of eating disorders during pregnancy... [but] in 2012 it was reported that 27% of women displayed psychological and behavioral features associated with an eating disorder during pregnancy.” (Broussard, 2012)
1. Similarities between early recovery from an eating disorder and the Perinatal period

Eating Disorder Recovery

- Increased food and/or “fear foods”
- New limits before during and after meals requiring different ways to regulate emotions and tolerate distress

Pregnancy/Postpartum

- Need for increased amounts of food
- Nausea and/or vomiting
- Food cravings/foods to avoid

Changes in Weight

- Women who were overweight pre-pregnancy experienced a higher likelihood of Major Depressive Disorder (MDD) during pregnancy.
- All women with weight gains below recommended levels had a higher risk of MDD during their pregnancy, regardless of pre-pregnancy BMI.

**Mood Disturbance**

**Eating Disorders**
In a structured clinical interview of 105 eating disordered patients, 81.9% of the sample, had Axis I diagnoses in addition to their eating disorder.


---

**Pregnancy/Postpartum**

- One in seven (or five) mothers has symptoms of Postpartum Depression.
- Pregnant women with Bulimia have more Anxiety and Depression.


---

**Bulimia and Pregnancy**

Women who have bulimia in pregnancy have more symptoms of anxiety and depression compared to pregnant women without eating disorders.

Women with bulimia reported
- lower self-esteem
- less satisfaction with their relationship with their partner
- a higher prevalence of symptoms associated with anxiety and depression


---

**Hormones**

**Eating Disorders:**
- Cessation of menstruation can lead to infertility; the body loses its ability to produce the levels of hormones needed to stimulate ovulation.

Anorexia May Inhibit Fertility, 2013
StorkNetFamily.com.

**Pregnancy:**
- Menstruation is absent; Skin health, dental health, thermoregulation, hair growth, and digestion/absorption functions are all affected.
- Progesterone spikes from ten to a hundred times its normal level

**Postpartum:**
- levels of the reproductive hormones, estrogen and progesterone, drop precipitously.

Brizendine, Louann. The Female Brain, Braidway Books 2006
MGH Center for Women’s Mental Health: www.womensmentalhealth.org/posts/postpartum-depression-and-poor-sleep-quality-occur-together/
Sleep

Eating Disorders:
* Difficulty falling asleep
* Getting to sleep without using the ritual of the eating disorder,
* Staying asleep, and/or early morning wakening

Postpartum:
* Infant awake at night; asleep in day, waking every three hours
* Hormonal factors: “Immediately after childbirth, levels of the reproductive hormones, estrogen and progesterone, drop precipitously. It is believed that, because these [estrogen and progesterone] modulate neurotransmitter systems in the brain responsible for sleep quality, this dramatic hormonal shift may cause significant disruptions in sleep.”

MGH Center for Women’s Mental Health
www.womensmentalhealth.org/posts/postpartum-depression-and-poor-sleep-quality-occur-together

The Importance of Support

PERFECTIONIST TEMPERMENT

Danger of “SUPERMOM”

History of Abuse

Pregnant women with bulimia had a higher prevalence of sexual abuse.

Norwegian Institute of Public Health (2008, September 18)
Identity

Who am I without an eating Disorder?

Who am I as a Mom?

2. Markers of eating disorder recovery that are helpful to solidify prior to pregnancy and motherhood

Marker of Eating Disorder Recovery (Physical)

- Regular menses and/or weight is in “normal” BMI range
- Abstinence from restricting, purging, bingeing behaviors
- Medical stability according to lab work, bone density tests, EKG, etc


Markers of Eating Disorder Recovery (Physical, continued):

* The ability to tolerate a wide range of foods and natural shifts in weight; Body size and shape acceptance
* Ability to separate physical from emotional hunger cues.
* Moderate relationship with exercise
* Freedom from obsession with weight & food


Markers of Eating Disorder Recovery (Emotional)

* The ability to understand and resolve, other than through disordered eating, the issues underlying and driving disordered eating.
* Ability to tolerate distress and regulate emotions using coping tools.
* Ability to reach out for, accept and sustain support/support system

Markers of Eating Disorder Recovery (Psychological)

* The ability to recognize signs of relapse and to seek appropriate help if relapse occurs.
* Triggers for relapse thinking or behaviors can be identified.
* Awareness of cognitive distortions and temperament risks (Perfectionism, Emotional reasoning, Personalizing)
* Development of Identity not based on Eating Disorder
3. Media vs. actual experiences of having a mother’s body during pregnancy and postpartum; inter-generational transmission of body image dissatisfaction.

"The media is full of images of women’s bodies. But not these kinds of bodies."

BBC World Service (Cordelia Hebblethwaite) “Are women's bodies still beautiful after pregnancy?” 15 July 2013
The Desperate Housewives effect
Eating Disorders often occur during times of transition: the phenomena of women developing ED’s in later life has been dubbed “the Desperate Housewives effect.”

Royal Kate Middleton, 2 days/3 months postpartum

“It’s hard to imagine now, but the portrait of Demi Moore nude and pregnant on the cover of Vanity Fair was truly scandalous in 1991...it sold out on newsstands at Grand Central Station during the morning rush hour...[it was] displayed it in a white paper wrapper, as if it were a porn magazine. Several supermarket chains refused to sell it even with the wrapper... A few years later, the picture was held responsible for the rise of body-hugging maternity fashions.”
Consumer culture readily supports the notion of postpartum body as an object in need of discipline and control; entire industries have emerged around the idea of remaking the postpartum body.

(Upton and Han, 2003; Ogle, Tyner, Schofield-Tomachin, 2011.)

"Mothertucker"

"Mothertucker™ is the ultimate compression tank! You’ll be WOWed with how it smooths and shapes your middle."

The red carpet and “Mommy-tucks”

Mommy surgery came to public attention... after the American Society of Plastic Surgeons reported a rise in cosmetic surgery among women of child-bearing age. Last year, doctors nationwide performed more than 325,000 “mommy makeover procedures” on women ages 20 to 39.


Celebrities that are speaking out

“Jennifer Garner confirms Baby Bump”

* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GyC1hOFewQ
You might be tempted to do this:

“Moms Bathing Suit
One Giant
Body-eclipsing
Ruffle”

- The Onion, Aug 25, 2014

Don’t do it!
Fake it until you make it. Your child is watching. You are their mirror.

The best-known contributor to the development of anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa is body dissatisfaction. (Stice, 2002)

Reality magazine talks back

Featuring:
* How to get a bikini body... Put a bikini on your body!
* 10 Ways you can tell society to shove its ideals about beauty!
* Oops! I shit my pants
* How my tiger stripes have started a movement

www.bodyimagemovement.com.au
Kids and Body Image

By age 6, girls especially start to express concerns about their own weight or shape. 40-60% of elementary school girls (ages 6-12) are concerned about their weight or about becoming too fat. This concern endures through life (Smolak, 2011).

Body Image distress masks concern around new identity formation

“For many women, a central and profound concern of pregnancy revolves around whether, after the pregnancy is over, the body will return to ‘normal.’”


Inter-generational transmission of body image dissatisfaction

Individuals with eating disorders often did not experience a separate sense of self in their early (preverbal) development. This lack of awareness of boundaries of the self translates into a body image that lacks coherence, cohesiveness, or organization.

The Postpartum Body: “A Repertoire of possible selves”

“I’m waiting, ’til this baby’s born, and I can get my old body back...[This pregnancy is] a temporary distortion of my body...I know my body will never be the same, but some women just can’t even get their own shape back at all, and I’m bound and determined not to be one of them.”


First time parent Wives and Husbands interviewed around “jointly navigating the concerns about the postpartum body”

“Getting my pre-pregnancy body back is really something I would like to achieve because I was looking on the internet and they said ‘The majority of women will not return to their pre-pregnancy weight.’”

“I want my old self back.”

“I lost the beauty of my body...My body has the marks of a mother, and it won’t get back to normal beauty.”

“I didn’t know what to expect. I was expecting her stomach to be a lot smaller than it was after she had the baby and it wasn’t so that was surprising.”

(Guy and Banim, 2000; Ogle, Tyner and Schofield-Tomschin, 2011)

“How women navigate and cope with stresses incited by the bodily experiences of postpartum can impact their integration of the maternal identity as well as their successful adaptation to parenthood, which, in and of itself, can be a demanding and stressful transition for both women and men.”

(Guy and Banim, 2000; Ogle, Tyner and Schofield-Tomschin, 2011)
“Aesthetically problematic” vs. “Maternally Successful” fat

We live in a fat phobic culture that associates being overweight with “a sign of failure to adequately control the body” (Shilling, 2003).

Some wives (first time mothers) were so worried about their postpartum bodies that they postponed interacting with colleagues until they had reached certain “milestones” in recovering their former bodily selves.

Ogle, Tyner, Schofield-Tomschin, 2011

“Maternally successful”

“I’m incredibly impressed by what my body can do... I definitely am a little disappointed I don’t fit back into my jeans, and it definitely feels like a waterbed... I don’t look like a model, but I just gave birth, whatever. The actual physical way I look doesn’t matter so much to me because my body just did an amazing thing.”

(First time mother)

Ogle, Tyner, Schofield-Tomschin, 2011

“Although findings from the quantitative literature provide some valuable understanding about women’s attitudes and behaviors toward the postpartum body, research adopting this approach cannot provide a rich account of the embodied experience of what it is like to reside in a liminal, postpartum body.”

Ogle, Tyner, Schofield-Tomschin, 2011
“Findings in a study exploring body-related concerns and coping strategies of postpartum women with varying levels of eating disorder pathology suggest that even participants in a control group experienced a sense of loss with respect to their pre-pregnancy bodies. In contrast to eating-disordered participants, women in the control group often postponed efforts to regain their pre-pregnancy bodies, waiting until they could “accept the reality of the change and could feel hopeful about the future.””

(Patel, Lau, Wheatcroft, Narnes, and Stein, 2005; Ogle, Tyner and Schiefelbein-Turnock, 2011)

5. Postpartum bellies as doorways to transformation

Jade Bealle is a world-renown Photographer specializing in truthful images of women to inspire feeling irreplaceably beautiful as a counter-balance to the airbrushed photo-shopped imagery that dominates main stream media. Her recent work "A Beautiful Body Project" has touched 100,000's of women's lives and garnered global attention.
Middrift Movement

Carrying babies, large, incredibly active babies (my last tipped the scales at 10 and a half pounds) this my friends, did a number on me. My body has been stretched, pulled, tugged, loved, and snuggled. I have been at once in awe and also at odds with my body.

I would never, ever trade the immense honor of carrying and birthing my children, but I do miss my pre-baby body, the one before this road map of love was carved out upon me. I stand in the mirror longing to adore what I see and trying to not end the sentence, “I am beautiful, but…..”.

This is where Mid Drift was born. This need to connect all of these mama voices. The need to show mothers that you are not alone in your hormone addled struggles with your body. I want mothers to know that we see you and we love you. We stand side by jiggly side in solidarity.

Our purpose is to change society’s unrealistic expectations of what a mother’s body should look like and to embrace motherhood’s physical transformations.

middriftmovement.com

Birth Markings

Margaret Lazarus’ film “BirthMarkings” explores our post birth bodies—and how our self-image—change after giving birth. “BirthMarkings” reframes the concept of beauty and motherhood, raises important questions about body image, and reveals the incongruity of western standards of beauty with the natural process of pregnancy and childbirth.
Recovery is Possible. You are not alone.

WEB: DrLindaShanti.com
BLOG: Recoverymama.com