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IS EMOTION RECOGNITION PROCESSING ACROSS MENSTRUAL CYCLE AND A HISTORY OF POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION POTENTIAL RISK FACTORS FOR PREMENSTRUAL DYSPHORIC DISORDER?

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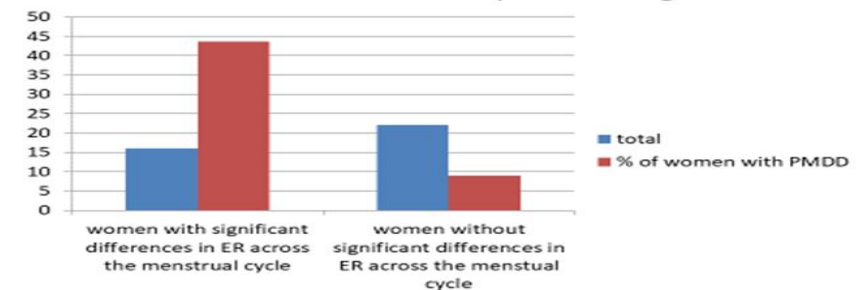
Introduction: Many women during the different phases of the menstrual cycle experience significant emotional and cognitive changes; for some, these changes can be sufficiently severe to affect their everyday living. Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder (PMDD) is a health problem similar to premenstrual syndrome but more serious. It affects up to 5% of women of childbearing age. The exact cause is unknown; still, hormonal changes throughout the menstrual cycle may play a role. Also, women with a family history of Postpartum Depression (PPD) may be at increased risk.

Objectives: The purpose of this study was to examine if Emotion recognition processing across menstrual cycle and a history of PPD are potential risk factors for PMDD.

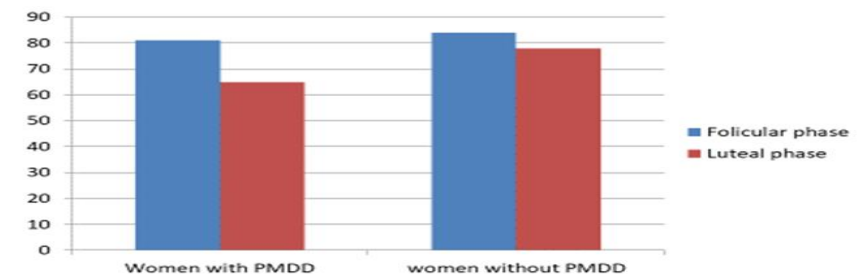
Methods: We checked archive data of women who have visited the Mental Health Centre and identified 34 with a history of PPD. Then, we contacted their daughter to explain the purpose of our study. Of those meeting the criteria to participate, 38 volunteered (aged 18-30 y.o., right handed, educational level >9 y., regular cycle duration). The Emotion Recognition Task (ERT) was administered in the luteal and the follicular phase. Women found to present significant differences in emotion recognition depending on the estradiol and progesterone levels were clinically interviewed (DSM-V).

Results: Of the 16 women who have showed significant differences across the two phases of the menstrual cycle, 7 were diagnosed with PMDD (43,7%). Among the ones who have not presented differences (22), only 2 received a diagnosis of PMDD (9%).

Percentage of women with PMDD who showed differences in ER processing vs women without differences in ER processing



Emotion recognition task – correct responses



Conclusions: This study shows that Emotion recognition processing across menstrual cycle and a history of PPD may predict which women could be at risk for PMDD, playing, therefore a key role in PMDD early diagnosis.