



UNIVERSITY OF WALES
Trinity Saint David
London

BSc (Hons) Health and Social Care

**Module: Introduction to Independent Research
Skills (BMHP5019)**

**ASSESSMENT TITLE:
ASSESSMENT 1 - RESEARCH
PROPOSAL**

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Research Proposal

Topic: The Effectiveness of Digital Mental Health Interventions in Supporting Mothers with Postpartum Depression in the UK.

1) Review question:

How effective are digital mental health interventions in managing and supporting mothers with postpartum depression within UK healthcare settings?

2) Objectives:

- Identify the range of digital interventions currently available for postpartum depression in the UK.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of Digital Mental Health Interventions in reducing depressive symptoms and improving maternal wellbeing.
- Identify challenges, limitations, and opportunities for integrating digital tools into routine maternal mental health care.
- Provide recommendations for improving the design, accessibility, and implementation of digital mental health interventions for postpartum depression.

3) Rationale:

Postpartum depression (PPD) affects around one in ten women in the UK, thereby impacting both maternal and infant wellbeing (NHS, 2023). Over 63,800 women accessed specialist perinatal mental health services in 2025, barriers such as stigma and limited access persist (Royal College of Psychiatrists, 2025). Therefore, research on the use of digital interventions to support maternal mental health is urgently needed; and digital interventions provide flexible and accessible alternatives to traditional care, potentially bridging existing treatment gaps (Anyanwu and Jenkins, 2024).

4) Methods:

This research will employ a scoping review approach, utilizing secondary data (Iannizzi et al., 2023). Between three and five peer-reviewed journal articles will be identified and retrieved from databases including PubMed, ProQuest, and Google Scholar to synthesise current evidence on the topic.

- **Keywords:** (digital mental health interventions postpartum depression UK) OR (postpartum depression support mothers UK) OR (digital therapy for postpartum depression) OR (postpartum depression) AND (digital interventions) AND (UK)

- **Data analysis:** Thematic analysis. This involves analysing the articles and identifying common themes to present the findings (Braun and Clark, 2021).

Inclusion Criteria

- Peer-reviewed primary and secondary research studies.
- Published in English between 2015 and 2025.
- Focused on mothers residing in the UK.
- Investigating the role of digital mental health interventions in managing and supporting postpartum depression within UK healthcare settings.

Exclusion Criteria

- Non-peer-reviewed sources, including reports, websites, and books.
- Studies concentrating on children or male population.
- Research conducted outside the UK.
- Publications not in English or published prior to 2015.

5) Ethical considerations:

As this study uses publicly available data, no primary ethical approval is required. Nevertheless, the research will adhere to principles of academic integrity, transparency, and researcher reflexivity (British Psychological Society, 2021). Proper citation, accurate representation of findings, and acknowledgment of potential researcher bias will be maintained (Israel and Hay, 2023). Furthermore, the review will recognise the limits of current evidence, promoting responsible, inclusive, and equitable recommendations for digital mental health practice (Hosseini, Wieczorek & Gordijn, 2022).

References

- Anyanwu, I.S. and Jenkins, J. (2024) 'Effectiveness of digital health interventions for perinatal depression: a systematic review and meta-analysis', *Oxford open digital health*, 2, p. oqae026. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1093/oodh/oqae026>.
- Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2021) *Thematic Analysis: A Practical Guide*. London: Sage
- British Psychological Society (BPS) (2021) *Code of Human Research Ethics*. Leicester: British Psychological Society. Available at: <https://www.bps.org.uk/news-and-policy/bps-code-human-research-ethics-2021> (Accessed: 3 November 2025).
- Hosseini, M., Wieczorek, M. & Gordijn, B. (2022) "Ethical Issues in Social Science Research Employing Big Data", *Science and Engineering Ethics*. Available at: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11948-022-00380-7>.
- Iannizzi, C., Akl, E. A., Anslinger, E., Weibel, S., Kahale, L. A., Mosunmola Aminat, A., Piechotta, V., & Skoetz, N. (2023) 'Methods and guidance on conducting, reporting, publishing, and appraising living systematic reviews: a scoping review', *Systematic Reviews*, 12, 238.
- Israel, M. and Hay, I. (2023) *Research Ethics for Social Scientists: Between Ethical Conduct and Ethical Reflection*, 4th edn. London: SAGE.
- NHS (2023) *Postnatal depression*. Available at: <https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/conditions/post-natal-depression/overview/> (Accessed: 30 October 2025).
- Royal College of Psychiatrists (2025) *Progress expanding maternal mental healthcare at risk*. Available at: <https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/news-and-features/latest-news/detail/2025/05/08/progress-expanding-maternal-mental-healthcare-at-risk> (Accessed: 30 October 2025).
- Resnik, D.B. (2022) 'Ethical issues in research using publicly available data', *Science and Engineering Ethics*, 28, pp. 15–31. doi: 10.1007/s11948-021-00355-8.