

Remission of Maternal Depression is Associated with Reduction in Psychiatric disorders in their Children

M Weissman¹ DJ Pilowsky¹ P Wickramaratne¹ A Talati¹ STARD*D Child Team

¹ Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons, NY NY USA

Parental depression is among the most consistent and well replicated risk factor for childhood anxiety disorders, disruptive disorders and depression. These problems begin early in the offspring and continue into adulthood. The treatment of childhood psychiatric disorders is controversial and still based on a limited number of trials. In contrast the treatment of adult disorders using medication and/psychotherapy has numerous positive efficacy studies. We report results of a study providing three months of medication only treatment to depressed mothers and the outcome on their children who began the trial with high rates of psychopathology. The children were assessed by a team independent of the mothers treatment and blind to the clinical course of the mother. Mothers were selected for the study as the rates of depression are two to three times higher in women than men and because mothers were more likely to bring their children in for assessments. The results show remarkable reduction in symptoms and diagnosis in the offspring of mothers who remitted and an increase in symptoms and diagnosis in the offspring of mothers who did not remit over the 3 months. The results support the active treatment of depressed mothers as the impact is not only on themselves but on their children. The results need to be examined in depressed fathers.