**Screening for anxiety disorders during pregnancy and the postpartum using the GAD-2 and EPDS-3A**

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**Background:** Perinatal anxiety disorders are highly prevalent, affecting up to 15% of women during pregnancy and 10% of women in the year following birth. Australian and international clinical practice guidelines advocate for perinatal anxiety screening, however few studies have examined the test performance of recommended screening measures using gold standard methodology.

**Objective:** To assess the test performance of the Generalized Anxiety Disorder 2-item Scale (GAD-2) and the anxiety subscale of the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS-3A) in an Australian sample of pregnant and postpartum women.

**Methods:** 635 and 568 women completed the GAD-2, EPDS and SAGE-SR (anxiety disorder modules) as the gold standard in the third trimester and at 3-months postpartum, respectively. Recommended cut-off scores were used (i.e., GAD-2 ≥3; EPDS-3A ≥6) and, in keeping with previous research, measures were assessed against the following key criteria: Area under the curve (AUC) ≥0.8; Youden's Index of ≥ 0.5; Negative Predictive Value (NPV) ≥ 0.8; and Positive Likelihood Ratio (LR+) ≥ 4.0.

**Results:** The AUCs for the GAD-2 and EPDS-3A were 0.859 and 0.784, and 0.874 and 0.800, during pregnancy and at 3 months postpartum, respectively. NPV and LR+ assessment criteria were met for the GAD-2 and EPDS-3A at each time point, however neither measure met criteria for Youden’s index ≥ 0.5 during pregnancy or the postpartum.

**Conclusion:** This study provides an important contribution to the evidence-base relating to the use of screening measures to identify possible anxiety during the perinatal period. Findings will be discussed in the context of current best practice guidance and the growing research landscape.