**SMS Messages – a Feasibility Study Supporting Women with Perinatal Mental Illness and their Partners.**

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The Queensland SMS4Parents feasibility study tested the delivery of mental health promotion, prevention and support information, via text messaging, to women diagnosed with perinatal mental illness and their partners. Women were recruited from two public mental health services in regional Queensland. Their partners were also invited to receive messages that encouraged an indicated population of parents to look after their mental health, support their partner, learn about their new infants needs and ways to connect with their infant.

This feasibility study aimed to; test the effectiveness of the use of SMS technology in engaging parents, develop a set of SMS messages for an indicated population to raise awareness of and support the co-parenting relationship, measure fathers’ distress levels on entry to the research using the validated Depression Anxiety and Stress Scale 21 (DASS21), and identify whether initial level of distress and the SMS messages encouraged help-seeking among participating parents. Furthermore, the study aimed to explore the impact of specific SMS messages, measure parent’s perceptions of their co-parenting relationship on entry to the research program, and identify whether perceptions of this relationship affect help seeking, as well as evaluate the general impact of the SMS messages through a post message protocol phone interview and the research methodological approach.

Research and scoping data identifies mothers in the perinatal period with infants to be prolific users of smart phone technology to communicate and find information. A growing evidence-base also supports the use of SMS messages to engage new fathers in learning about their mental health and wellbeing. Results from this and several SMS4Dads studies, including a national randomised control trial, indicate that many participating parents discussed the text messages with their partner, that these discussions led to more cooperative parenting practices and a greater understanding about their newborn infants needs and behaviour.