

AAP DISTRICT VIII SECTION ON NEONATAL PERINATAL MEDICINE

**2021 ANNUAL CONFERENCE ORIGINAL RESEARCH (BASIC SCIENCE or CLINICAL)
ABSTRACT SUBMISSION FORM**

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DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT OF ABSTRACT IS FEBRUARY 19, 2021. Submissions will be accepted for either poster or oral presentation. Authors will be notified of acceptance and format for presentation (poster or poster symposium) by **March 12, 2021.**

Title: Implementing Essential Coaching for Every Mother during COVID-19: A Pilot Pre-Post Intervention Study

Authors: Justine Dol¹, Megan Aston², Amy Grant³, Douglas McMillan⁴, Gail Tomblin Murphy⁵, Marsha Campbell-Yeo²

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Background: In the postpartum period, women face challenges in accessing information and finding adequate support, which has only been magnified during the COVID-19 pandemic. Rates of postpartum depression and perinatal anxiety have increased during COVID-19. Additionally, support from healthcare providers and family members has decreased due to physical distancing recommendations, potentially leading to low maternal self-efficacy. Innovative solutions to bridge the postpartum care gap are more important than ever. One such innovation is *Essential Coaching for Every Mother*, a mobile health, text message program designed to send daily text messages to mothers during the immediate six-week postpartum period.

The primary objective of this study was to evaluate the preliminary impact of *Essential Coaching for Every Mother* on self-efficacy, social support, postpartum anxiety and postpartum depression. The second objective was to explore the acceptability of the *Essential Coaching for Every Mother* program provided during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Methods: A prospective pre-post study was conducted with first time mothers in Nova Scotia, Canada between July 15th and September 19th, 2020. Participants completed a self-report survey for baseline at enrollment after birth and follow-up at six-weeks postpartum. A variety of standardized measures were administered and qualitative feedback on the program was also collected. Paired t-tests were carried out to determine changes from baseline to follow-up on psychosocial outcomes and qualitative feedback was analyzed through thematic analysis.

Results: A total of 88 women were enrolled. Self-efficacy increased between baseline and follow-up (*Mean difference (MD)*= 3.78, *p*=0.000) while anxiety (STAI) declined (*MD*= -3.07; *p*=0.004). No other significant changes were found. In terms of acceptability, 89.0% of participants felt that the number of messages were just right, 84.5% felt the messages contained all the information they needed relative to caring for a newborn and 98.8% indicated they would recommend this program to other new mothers.

Conclusion: *Essential Coaching for Every Mother* may play a role increasing maternal self-efficacy and decreasing anxiety, although future work with a control group is needed to delineate the true effects of the program. Overall, mothers were satisfied with the *Essential Coaching for Every Mother* program and would recommend it for other mothers, during COVID-19 and beyond. Further work evaluating *Essential Coaching for Every Mother* in a randomized controlled trial is ongoing.