METHODS

All articles are peer-reviewed, totally gathering of articles yielded 25 studies. After carefully reviewing relevant to the study topic. Studies were included in this literature review if they met the following criteria:

- Focus on the relationship between oxytocin and postpartum depression (PPD)
- Use of oxytocin as a treatment or intervention for PPD
- Use of oxytocin during pregnancy or postpartum period
- Study design: randomized controlled trials, cohort studies, and case-control studies
- Analysis of oxytocin levels and PPD symptoms

METHODS

A total of 10 articles were reviewed. All 10 studies demonstrated a significant relationship between blood oxytocin concentrations and onset of PPD, as well as a correlation between fluctuations of this hormone and PPD symptom severity. Conclusions: The literature supports that plasma oxytocin levels significantly predict onset of depressive symptoms during the postpartum period. Further research is required to assess whether other factors—such as the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis, or DNA methylation—correlate with plasma oxytocin levels that produce similar outcomes in pregnant women.

RESULTS

A total of 23 articles selected from multiple databases were analyzed. Due to exclusion criteria, there was an emphasis on articles which did not include literature and systematic reviews and studies which did not incorporate a baseline study before intervention. As a result, a total of ten studies were determined to be relevant to the study of PPD and oxytocin levels.

CONCLUSION & DISCUSSION

This literature review contains many limitations that may have affected the outcome of this study. Our findings may have been subject to publication bias, which could affect the generalizability of our results. Furthermore, the method of evaluating oxytocin levels in the population of interest was not standardized. Studies had to have measured oxytocin levels before and after postpartum depression intervention. Studies should have proper assessment of postpartum depression in mothers at the start of the study and at the end.

Outcome measured for study must be related to depressive symptomatology. Studies were excluded if the study’s aim was too broad, i.e., not focusing on PPD. Studies were also excluded if the aim was not to examine the relationship between oxytocin and PPD. Studies were further excluded if the article did not provide enough information to judge the validity of the data. All articles were peer-reviewed, and the review process ensured that only relevant studies were included.

REFERENCES