

## **Men's depressed mood in connection with the birth of their child**

In international research it is slowly being acknowledged that men as well as women can develop mood disorders during the transition to parenthood. The prevalence of pre and post partum depression for women is 10-15 % while there are no well-established measures of the prevalence for men's depressions in connection with the birth of their child. International research mention figures between two and twelve percent.

On basis on the reality of pre and postnatal depressions in fathers this study explores the thoughts and feelings of fathers with mood disturbances pre and post partum. The aim is to elaborate the mechanisms leading to such disturbances in men, to explore the individual and relational levels of the depression, and to suggest methods of treatment on the basis of this insight.

The material consists of statements from psychotherapies with 37 men with mood disorders pre and post natal. The statements were analysed these levels: The man's 1) Individual symptoms; 2) Pictures of himself as a father; 3) Relationship with the infant; 4) Experiences with and models of care giving in own childhood; 5) Relations with own mother and father present and in childhood. The statements and results from analysis were compared with statements and analysis of these from interviews with 41 fathers randomly selected from a birth ward.

Results from the study show that fathers with mood disturbances in connection with the birth of their child have disorders very similar to mothers with the well-established diagnosis post partum depressions. The central similarity between men's and women's pre- and postnatal mood disorders seems to be that the disturbance have roots in the both men's and women's relations with their own mother. It is notable that there seems to be no significant relation between the disorder and the man's relationship with his own father. Furthermore both men and women mood disorders express aggressive feelings about their infant, while content seems to be different: Men are concerned with fears of loosing their temper in interaction with the infant. Finally: The relation with the mother seems to be an important key to easing til disturbance and to develop healthy relations to the infant.