



BC WOMEN'S HOSPITAL
& HEALTH CENTRE

*An agency of the Provincial
Health Services Authority*

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

September 20, 2005

BC Women's sheds light on depression during pregnancy

Vancouver, B.C. – The Reproductive Mental Health Program at BC Women's Hospital & Health Centre continues to break new ground in the diagnosis and treatment of depression during pregnancy.

"Depression experienced during pregnancy is just as urgent a public health issue as post-partum depression," said Dr. Shaila Misri, Director of Reproductive Mental Health at BC Women's. "The burden of disease is huge; therefore early intervention and timely treatment to avoid complications are essential for mom and the unborn baby."

To help inform health care providers and women who are pregnant or planning a family of the different faces of depression during pregnancy as well as treatment issues, Dr. Misri has written a book entitled "Pregnancy Blues", drawing on her 25 years of clinical practice at BC Women's and an extensive review of evidence-based research.

Dr. Misri joined BC Women's, then known as Grace Hospital, in 1979. The Reproductive Mental Health Program at BC Women's was formally established in 1994 and became a provincial program in 1998. Now the largest of its kind in Canada, Reproductive Mental Health is also an academic program with the Department of Psychiatry at the University of British Columbia, and a partner in the program at St. Paul's Hospital.

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The BC Women's Reproductive Mental Health Program also collaborates with clinics at Royal Columbian Hospital and Richmond Hospital, as well as in Victoria. The program hopes to eventually establish satellite clinics in communities throughout B.C.

"Up to 70 per cent of pregnant women experience depression during their pregnancy, with some meeting the clinical criteria for severe depression," said Dr. Misri. "This is a very treatable condition if the mother gets the help she needs."

While the medical concerns for each woman's pregnancy and mental health are unique to each patient, Dr. Misri's book "Pregnancy Blues" does provide information regarding how to recognize signs of depression, the role of female hormones in depression during pregnancy, the antidepressant controversy as well as information on treatment options.

BC Women's Hospital & Health Centre, an agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority, provides service for pregnant women, newborns and women with specialized health needs from across the province. For more information please visit www.bcwomens.ca.

The Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA) plans, manages and evaluates selected specialty and province-wide health care services across BC, working with the five geographic health authorities to deliver province-wide solutions that improve the health of British Columbians. For more information please visit www.phsa.ca.

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