TITLE: “Postnatal depression we call Western illness because you are alone”. Discursive accounts of health and wellbeing from mothers of refugee backgrounds in the context of a major life transition.

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Abstract (no more than 250 words with no figures or tables):

The Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS) is arguably the most widely used screening tool for depression in the perinatal period, however, application cross-culturally is problematic. The difficulties in administering the scale to women from refugee backgrounds were explored as part of a larger study which evaluated a specialist antenatal clinic located in a tertiary hospital in Queensland. Approximately 170 pregnant women attend the clinic annually; 26 countries and 24 language groups were represented over the year (2009-2010) the evaluation was undertaken. A mixed methods approach generated qualitative and quantitative data. Peer Research Assistants (PRAs) were trained and employed to assist with data collection. The data presented here resulted primarily from a focus group conducted with the PRAs which explored their personal and professional experiences of the EPDS. They reported problems with the terminology and concepts presented in the EPDS, many of which were culturally specific, and limited, to Western biomedical ideologies. Individual ‘tailoring’ of the scale by clinicians was necessary in order to ensure women understood the questions however, (re)interpretation of a validated tool raises questions about objectivity, and the reliability of the score recorded. Staff also reported that they struggled to exercise their clinical judgment, especially with respect to the recommended cut-off scores and the need for referral. Our findings call for an urgent examination of how multidimensional, cross-
cultural, definitions might be incorporated into future iterations of the EPDS with any research taking account of the particular sensitivities affecting women from refugee backgrounds.