
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF HEALTHCARE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF MOTHER POSTPARTUM SENSE OF SECURITY

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Abstract: The sense of security of mothers after childbirth is crucial for their adaptation to motherhood, bonding with the newborn, as well as building stronger connections with their partner and family. The feeling of security empowers mothers to be independent in newborn care, which requires support. In addition to family support, it is essential for all women during pregnancy and postpartum period to receive support from healthcare professionals to facilitate their adjustment to their new role in life. High-quality healthcare for women during pregnancy and postpartum should be the goal of all healthcare institutions focused on improving healthcare services and family-oriented care. A review of relevant scientific literature emphasizes the significance of healthcare in development of maternal postpartum sense of security.

Keywords: sense of security. Midwife, healthcare

1. INTRODUCTION

In the antenatal period, the transition to motherhood is a critical milestone in pregnancy and childbirth, especially for first-time mothers (Finlayson K. et al., 2020). Antenatal health care that is person-centered is a form of care that respects and responds to women's preferences, needs, and values. It involves recognition by the system and service providers, communication between users and providers, interpersonal treatment, patient engagement, and similar constructs (Rubashkin N. et al., 2018).

A traumatic birth experience can have significant effects on women's mental health after giving birth and their relationships with their families. In the short term, women may experience pain and suffering as a result of the negative experience. However, research from international literature indicates that there are also long-term consequences, including the development of a fear of childbirth and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

It is widely recognized that providing quality and respectful maternal health care is a global priority. To achieve this, four standards have been identified to guide care providers. These standards emphasize the importance of showing respect, dignity, emotional support, and a systemic commitment to person-centered informed decision-making (Vedam S. et al., 2019).

On the other hand, when women experience disrespect, violence, or neglect in childbirth facilities, it signifies a severe deficiency in person-centered health care (Rubashkin N. et al., 2018). Such negative experiences can lead to further trauma and exacerbate the negative consequences on women's mental health and their relationships.

Overall, it is crucial to prioritize respectful and person-centered care during childbirth to mitigate the risk of traumatic experiences and their long-term effects on women's well-being and family dynamics.

Educating service providers about user rights is an important step in improving the quality of care they provide. However, it is essential to recognize that developing the interpersonal skills and attitudes of service providers requires more than just knowledge. It requires time, motivation, and practice.

Research, such as the study by Afulani et al. (2020), suggests that training on preventing disrespect should be incorporated into pre-service education for service providers. By integrating this training early on, future healthcare professionals can develop a foundation of knowledge and skills that prioritize respectful and person-centered care from the start of their careers.

Health systems need to have the capacity to monitor and describe patients' experiences with reliable indicators regarding abuse, dignity violations, and human rights violations in maternal health care. It has been shown that mentoring and role modeling in the workplace by management structures, as part of routine continuous professional education, can change team culture (Vedam S. et al, 2019).

2. ANTENATAL HEALTHCARE

Antenatal health care refers to the healthcare services delivered by qualified healthcare professionals to women throughout their pregnancy. It encompasses various aspects such as identifying and managing risks associated with pregnancy, preventing and treating pregnancy-related or concurrent illnesses, and providing health education and

guidance (Ali N. et al, 2020). Health screening during the perinatal period is the only universal health service that can provide health improvement, primary prevention, and early intervention (Tomaselli G. et al, 2020).

Antenatal health care is defined as "routine health care that all healthy women can expect during pregnancy" and includes health promotion activities. The purpose of antenatal health care is to prevent and support the entire population of pregnant women and their babies in order to maximize the health and well-being of the majority, and to identify, guide, and treat minorities who may experience complications during pregnancy (Downe S. et al, 2019). Achieving the best possible outcomes for pregnant women and their babies relies on the provision of healthcare that meets certain essential criteria. These criteria include the care being acceptable, accessible, available, and of high quality throughout the entire continuum of pregnancy, childbirth, and the postnatal period. This assertion is supported by research conducted by Downe et al. in 2018.

3. POSTNATAL PERIOD

The postnatal period is a crucial time for both mothers and babies, as it marks a significant transition in their lives. During this phase, mothers undergo adjustments to their new role as parents, form secure attachments with their newborns, and establish relationships within their family and community.

One of the key aspects for women in the postnatal period is achieving a positive sense of motherhood. This includes developing self-esteem, a sense of competence in caring for the baby, and autonomy in decision-making. When this process is positive, it can lead to feelings of joy, self-confidence, and an improved ability to cope with challenges. It also contributes to the formation of a new integrated identity as both a woman and a mother. (Finlayson K. et al, 2020). The postnatal period is defined as the time immediately following childbirth. The duration of this period may vary across cultures. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the postnatal phase officially begins right after childbirth and lasts for six weeks or 42 days (Downe S. et al., 2018). During this period, women require support, care, and access to appropriate healthcare services to ensure their well-being and the well-being of their newborns.

4. POSTPARTUM SENSE OF SECURITY

Subjective perceived security is widely acknowledged in both theoretical and empirical literature as a fundamental human need that requires fulfillment. It refers to an emotional state in which an individual feels safe, confident, and free from doubt and anxiety. This need for security is inherent in all people and has been sought since the beginning of humanity. It impacts nearly all aspects of human life and is crucial for overall quality of life.

During the transition to parenthood, both mothers and fathers experience physical and psychosocial changes that can trigger uncertainty and apprehension. The process of reorganizing and preparing for new living conditions and social roles can generate subjective insecurity and anxiety. This subjective insecurity and anxiety, specifically related to pregnancy and childbirth, can have significant consequences for parental experiences, the adjustment to the parental role, and the establishment of attachment to the child during the postnatal period (Werner-Bierwisch T. et al., 2018). While the literature may not explicitly mention the sense of security in mothers, there are important factors that contribute to it, particularly in women without pregnancy complications. Research by Velagic et al. (2019), highlights several significant factors that contribute to a sense of security in these women, including social support, antenatal health care, and partner support.

A positive postnatal experience for women involves successfully adapting to their new identity as mothers and developing a sense of confidence and competence in their intimate and family relationships, including their relationship with the child. This process includes coping with physical and emotional challenges, experiencing personal growth, and adjusting to the cultural context of motherhood and parenthood. Support from family, community, and healthcare professionals is crucial in helping women overcome exhaustion and manage the physical, emotional, and psychological stress that may arise in the early postnatal period. However, challenges can arise if women lack access to extended family support or if conflicts exist within their relationships. Such circumstances can make it difficult for women to cope and successfully integrate their identities as women and mothers (Finlayson K. et al, 2020). Professional support, especially through individualized home visits, has been shown to be important in enhancing parental comfort and sense of security while reducing tension and the risk of postpartum depression. Active participation of husbands in the psychophysical preparation for childbirth has also been linked to higher levels of maternal sense of security during the first week after childbirth (Kurth E. et al, 2016). Moreover, research by Velagić et al. (2019) indicates that active participation by husbands in the psychophysical preparation for childbirth contributes to higher levels of maternal sense of security during the first week after childbirth. According to Werner-Bierwisch et al. (2018), establishing a confidential relationship between midwives, other healthcare professionals, and parents is crucial for enhancing the sense of security among parents. The authors

emphasize the importance of healthcare providers being aware of their role in creating a sense of security for parents during pregnancy, childbirth, and the postnatal period.

5. MODEL OF MIDWIFE-LED ANTENATAL HEALTHCARE

The midwife-led model of antenatal care is an evidence-based approach that enhances the provision of antenatal healthcare. It aligns with the universal philosophy of midwifery, which emphasizes promoting normal physiological pregnancy and childbirth while supporting women's natural ability to give birth with minimal or no routine interventions. Midwives practice holistic healthcare, guided by ethical principles, equality, and respect for human dignity. Their practice is grounded in continuous education and the use of scientific research and evidence (Edmonds JK et al., 2020). The optimal model of antenatal care involves the leadership of a midwife in establishing a continuous relationship with the woman. This model emphasizes the importance of a known midwife or a small group of known midwives supporting the woman throughout the entire reproductive journey, including pregnancy, childbirth, and the postnatal period. It is recommended to implement this model within well-organized midwifery programs to ensure comprehensive and consistent care (de Masi S. et al., 2017).

During antenatal contacts, one of the primary objectives is to establish a relationship with the woman and her family in preparation for parenthood and the postnatal care of the newborn. This relationship-building process helps foster trust, open communication, and a collaborative approach to care (Olander EK. et al., 2019).

Effective communication is essential in antenatal care and requires service providers to establish rapport, demonstrate respect, consider the user's perspective, and exhibit empathy. It is through effective communication that users' autonomy is respected, allowing them to express their views and actively participate in decision-making processes. Good communication facilitates understanding and promotes user involvement in healthcare decision-making, thus supporting their autonomy (Afulani PA. et al., 2020). The midwife-led model of antenatal healthcare has been extensively researched and proven to have positive effects on outcomes for mothers and newborns. It is closely associated with the biopsychosocial model of care, which aims to provide comprehensive support that addresses the physical, psychological, and social needs of women and their families throughout pregnancy, childbirth, and the early postnatal period. This model ensures that the birthing environment and healthcare providers prioritize the physiological needs of women and infants, while interventions are utilized only when necessary. It also promotes women's autonomy and informed decision-making, thereby promoting equality in healthcare (Rayment J. et al., 2020).

Midwives, when educated and trained to international standards, are capable of providing 87% of routine antenatal healthcare for women and newborns. However, it is important to have a supportive team of nurses, doctors, and specialists in place to ensure comprehensive coverage of services across the continuum of care, from preconception to the postnatal period, and across various healthcare settings, including both community and hospital settings (Day-Stirk F. et al., 2014).

6. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF QUALITY HEALTHCARE

The initial days following childbirth are a crucial period for mothers and their infants, and young parents often need support to navigate the challenges and fears that come with transitioning into parenthood. In order to facilitate safe early discharge from the maternity hospital, it is essential to ensure that adequate postnatal healthcare is available at home to prevent the need for hospital readmission (Grylka-Baeschlin S. et al., 2020).

Over the past few decades, there has been a trend towards reducing the length of hospital stays after childbirth. This change in approach aims to decrease healthcare costs and promote a less medicalized approach to pregnancy and childbirth (Metcalfe A. et al., 2016).

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, early discharge from the maternity hospital is recommended under the condition that parents are reliable, capable, and knowledgeable in providing newborn care in a home environment with family support and access to a healthcare professional within 48 hours after discharge (Blumovich A. et al, 2020., Jadranka D. et al. 2011). Early discharge from the maternity hospital creates opportunities for family-oriented healthcare, greater bonding opportunities for the family in their home environment, and has been proven to be a safe and cost-effective way of providing postnatal healthcare. In low- and middle-income countries, implementing home visits and community mobilization activities led by community healthcare professionals has been associated with positive outcomes in neonatal care. These initiatives have been shown to reduce neonatal mortality rates, increase exclusive breastfeeding practices, and demonstrate cost-effectiveness in improving newborn health outcomes (Tiruneh GT. et al., 2019).

To ensure an effective transition from hospital to home settings, healthcare professionals need to establish organizational infrastructure that promotes collaboration, efficient data sharing, and communication. This infrastructure enables seamless coordination between different healthcare providers involved in postnatal care.

Additionally, families can benefit from an integrated package of postnatal healthcare, which may include home visits by qualified healthcare professionals, access to a 24-hour helpline, and readily available assistance if needed, particularly in the absence of social support. Such a safety net can support the establishment of a strong bond between the child and the mother, promote self-care, and empower new parents in their role as primary caregivers of the newborn (Kurth E. et al., 2016).

Postnatal healthcare professional contacts provide services such as facilitating healthy breastfeeding practices, monitoring the growth and general health of the child, identifying any birth-related complications, providing counseling services, and referring mothers and babies to specialized healthcare if needed (Finlayson K. et al, 2020). A nurse plays a crucial role in timely re-hospitalization of newborns within the first seven days of life (Jadranka D.et al., 2011).

Guaranteed postnatal healthcare plays a crucial role in alleviating the burden on families and reducing stress. Families highly value the services provided by midwives, recognizing the support and assistance they offer during the postnatal period. It is important that the responsibility for organizing postnatal healthcare is not solely placed on families but that access to healthcare is facilitated and promoted by community healthcare providers and hospitals. The integration of healthcare systems brings numerous benefits for midwives, families, and other healthcare professionals (Grylka-Baesclin S. et al., 2020).

The desire for professional home assistance by parents can be attributed to the decline of traditional extended family postnatal support in postmodern societies. Due to social changes and migration, most new parents now live in nuclear family environments where the availability of traditional family support is limited. Additionally, new social norms that emphasize independence and portray the ideal mother as independent and selfless can make it challenging for new mothers to seek and accept help within their social environment (Kurth E. et al., 2016).

Women who have received continuous midwife-led healthcare have required fewer interventions and expressed greater satisfaction with antenatal healthcare compared to women who have received other models of healthcare (Sandall J.et al., 2015). The question arises as to why antenatal healthcare programs vary in quality and what drivers or barriers could be for providing better healthcare in the future by staff and healthcare providers (Downe S. et al, 2019).

The WHO report on nursing and midwifery in the European region highlights the structural barriers that hinder the full potential of midwives and nurses in healthcare systems. These barriers include a dominance of medicine in healthcare systems, inadequate financial resources, and obstacles that impede the implementation of recommendations for expanding access to midwifery units in Europe. Currently, there is significant variation in the provision of antenatal healthcare, and practical barriers need to be addressed to make progress in improving access to midwifery units.

To ensure the successful implementation of a model of healthcare that emphasizes midwifery units, it is crucial to have an adequate number of qualified midwives. This ensures the provision of continuous and high-quality antenatal healthcare. Policymakers must prioritize the establishment of well-functioning midwifery programs before scaling up the implementation of this model.

Delivering quality antenatal healthcare services requires healthcare professionals who possess excellent clinical and interpersonal skills. Training and development programs for healthcare professionals should not only focus on evidence-based practices but also emphasize the importance of positive behaviors and attitudes. By incorporating training in effective communication and empathetic care, healthcare service providers can develop the necessary interpersonal skills to deliver individualized and person-centered healthcare.

Investing in the capacity building of healthcare service providers and increasing the number of midwives is essential for improving the quality of antenatal healthcare services. This requires strategic planning and resource allocation to ensure an adequate workforce and ongoing professional development opportunities for healthcare professionals (Rayment J. et al., 2020).

7. CONCLUSION

The midwife-led continuity model of care is a well-established and evidence-based approach for providing antenatal healthcare that has demonstrated positive outcomes for both mothers and newborns. This model focuses on delivering consistent and personalized care throughout the entire pregnancy journey, from prenatal to postnatal care. During the postnatal period, it is essential for mothers to experience positive motherhood, which involves developing a sense of self-esteem, competence, and autonomy in their role as mothers. The midwife-led continuity model supports mothers in achieving these important aspects by providing individualized care that caters to their unique needs and preferences. In the postpartum period, early support from a midwife in home settings is crucial for the mother to feel safer and be able to overcome any difficulties she may have. Building trust in a midwife during pregnancy is of great importance for the mother's sense of security after childbirth, and it would be desirable for the

midwife who was in contact with the mother during pregnancy to provide services to the mother after delivery. The arrival of an unfamiliar midwife can cause distrust and insecurity, especially when the advice given does not match the advice given by the midwife during pregnancy.

Healthcare has great significance in the development postpartum sense of security for the mother, provided that it is acceptable, accessible, available, individualized, and delivered by qualified healthcare personnel. Staff training and development programs should not solely prioritize evidence-based practices but also emphasize the importance of positive behaviors and attitudes among healthcare providers. Quality antenatal healthcare, including health education, plays a crucial role in promoting overall well-being and contributing to the postpartum sense of security for mothers.

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