

The Role of the Family in Childbirth: Supporting Maternal and Newborn Well-Being

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Abstract

The involvement of family in the childbirth process has become a primary focus in the field of midwifery. The active participation of family members in the care of pregnant women and childbirth not only provides emotional support but also contributes significantly to the well-being of both mother and newborn. This study aims to explore the impact of family involvement in childbirth on maternal and neonatal health outcomes. The research methodology involves surveys and interviews with families who have experienced the childbirth process. Findings indicate that the role of family in childbirth has a significant positive impact on the well-being of both mother and newborn, including the reduction of childbirth complications and the enhancement of maternal satisfaction and social support.

Keyword: Family Involvement, Childbirth, Maternal Health.

INTRODUCTION

Childbirth is one of the key moments in a woman's life that requires strong physical, emotional and psychological support. In this context, the role of the family becomes very significant. The support provided by family members, especially spouses or other close family members, can have a major impact on the well-being of the mother and newborn (Bohren et al., 2017). Previous studies have highlighted the importance of family presence during labor. The presence and support of a partner or family member can provide a sense of security, comfort and confidence for the mother, as well as improve the overall labor experience (Hodnett et al., 2013). However, while the role of family is recognized as an important factor in childbirth, there are still complexities that need to be further understood.

Some research suggests that appropriate and measured support from family can reduce stress levels and increase maternal satisfaction with the birth experience (World Health Organization, 2018). However, on the other hand, too much interference or inappropriate support from the family can also create tension and disrupt the labor process (Simkin & O'Hara, 2010). Therefore, an in-depth understanding of the role of family in childbirth is essential. Future research in this area could further explore how interactions between the family, mother and medical personnel during labor can be positively directed to improve the well-being of the mother and newborn. This includes the identification of effective communication strategies between the family and the medical team, as well as a better understanding of the social, cultural and economic factors that influence the family's role in labor.

In addition to providing emotional support, families also play an important role in facilitating women's access to quality health services during pregnancy, labor and the postpartum period. In many contexts, especially in less developed rural and urban areas, family support can be a determining factor in the availability and accessibility of safe maternal and neonatal health services (Moyer & Mustafa, 2013). However, the importance of family roles in childbirth is often overlooked in maternal health policy. Policy focus is often on the technical and medical aspects of childbirth, without considering the important role of the family as an integral part of a positive birth experience (World Health Organization, 2019).

The family's role in supporting the well-being of mothers and newborns also involves active involvement in labor planning, selection of an appropriate place of delivery, and decision-making regarding maternal and neonatal care (Bohren et al., 2019). In many cases, family members, especially partners, have a major influence in these decisions and can affect the overall birth experience (Sando et al., 2014). Moreover, the role of the family also extends to the postpartum period, where support and practical assistance from family members can help the mother in her physical and emotional recovery, as well as caring for the newborn (Moyer & Mustafa, 2013). By deepening our understanding of the role of families in childbirth, we hope to provide a stronger foundation for the development of more holistic and sustainable maternal health policies and programs. This includes efforts to actively involve families in maternal and neonatal care, raising awareness of the importance of family support in the birth experience, and ensuring that maternal health services are tailored to family needs and preferences.

METHODS

This research used a qualitative approach with a phenomenological study design. A qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to understand families' experiences and perceptions of their role in childbirth in greater depth (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The phenomenological study design was used to explore the meaning contained in the family's subjective experience during the labor process (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Research participants will be selected through a purposive sampling technique, where families who have experience in childbirth will be selected to become research subjects. Inclusion criteria include family members who are directly involved in childbirth, such as spouses or other family members who accompany the mother during labor.

Data will be collected through one-on-one in-depth interviews with participants. Interviews will take place in a place that is comfortable and safe for the participant, perhaps in their home or elsewhere as agreed. Interviews will be recorded with the consent of the participants and then transcribed verbatim for further analysis. Data analysis will be done using a theme approach. Once the transcription is complete, the researcher will read and summarize the data as a whole to identify the main themes that emerged from the interviews. Then, these themes will be further analyzed to gain a deeper understanding of the family's role in childbirth. Ethical considerations will be observed at all stages of the research. Participation in the study

will be voluntary, and participants will be given clear information about the purpose of the study and their right to withdraw at any time without negative consequences. Trust and confidentiality of data will be strictly maintained, with only the researcher having access to participant data and information.

DISCUSSION

Perceptions of the Family's Role in Childbirth

The majority of participants acknowledged that the role of family was very important during labor. They considered the emotional, physical, and informational support provided by family members to be very helpful in reducing stress and anxiety during labor. Some mothers even mentioned that the presence of family members, especially spouses or parents, gave them additional strength and encouragement to go through the labor process more calmly and confidently. However, there were also some mothers who felt that the support they received from their families was inadequate. Some participants complained about family members' lack of understanding or skills in providing the support needed, while others felt that they were not supported emotionally or physically during labor.

In this study, there was significant variation in perceptions of the family's role in childbirth among participants. Some mothers felt that family support was very important and beneficial during labor, while others may not have fully benefited from the support they received. Some of the factors that influence these perceptions include culture, family values, previous personal experiences, and level of knowledge about childbirth.

For example, some mothers may come from cultures where family support during labor is considered a socially valued norm. In these cultures, the presence of family members, especially the partner or mother of the expectant mother, is considered a strong sign of affection and support for the laboring mother. In contrast, in other cultures where childbirth is often considered a private and intimate affair, there may be a tendency to involve fewer family members in the birthing process.

Perceptions of the role of family may also be influenced by previous personal experiences. Mothers who have had positive experiences with family support during previous births tend to have a more positive view of the importance of the family's role in childbirth. On the other hand, mothers who experienced a lack of support or negative experiences with family members during previous deliveries may be more skeptical about the benefits

Impact of Family Support on Maternal and Newborn Wellbeing

Support provided by family members during labor has a significant impact on maternal and newborn well-being. Participants who felt they received adequate support from their families tended to experience lower levels of anxiety and stress during labor. They also reported higher levels of satisfaction with their labor experience. In addition, family support is also believed to speed up the mother's recovery process after childbirth. Many mothers feel more

comfortable and calm when they have family members supporting them during the recovery period in the hospital or at home. In the context of newborns, family support also plays an important role in facilitating early bonding between mother and baby. Babies born in a supportive and loving environment tend to experience better development emotionally and psychologically.

1. Emotional Support and Maternal Mental Wellbeing

Emotional support from family members during labor can help reduce the level of stress and anxiety experienced by the mother. According to research by Jones et al. (2018), mothers who feel emotionally supported by a partner or family member during labor tend to experience lower levels of postpartum depression and have a more positive perception of their overall labor experience. Emotional support can also increase a mother's self-esteem and confidence in her ability to face the challenges of labor.

2. Physical Support and Maternal Physical Wellbeing

In addition to emotional support, physical support provided by family members during labor also has a significant impact on the mother's physical well-being. Physical support may include assistance in a comfortable position during contractions, providing massage or pressure on painful points, or assisting with deep and regular breathing techniques. Research has shown that adequate physical support during labor can reduce the duration of labor and the rate of complications associated with the labor process (Campbell et al., 2019). This can help ensure the mother's physical well-being during labor and minimize the risk of complications that may occur.

3. Postpartum Support and Family Wellbeing

Family support is not only important during labor, but also afterwards. Mothers who have strong support from their family members after delivery tend to recover faster physically and emotionally and have more positive experiences with breastfeeding and caring for the newborn. In addition, strong family support can also help ease the burden of tasks associated with caring for the baby, such as changing diapers, feeding, and caring for the baby while the mother rests.

4. Implications for Clinical Practice

Understanding the importance of family support during labor has important implications for clinical practice. Healthcare providers should be mindful of the important role that family members play in supporting the well-being of the mother and newborn. This can include providing education and support to family members on how best to support the mother during labor and the postpartum period, as well as providing the necessary resources and counseling services to help families overcome challenges they may face.

The results showed that the role of the family in childbirth has a significant impact on the well-being of mothers and newborns. The main findings of this study can be summarized in several main themes, namely emotional support, physical support, and informational and decision support. Emotional support from family members, especially spouses, is an important factor in helping mothers cope with stress and anxiety during labor. The presence and moral

support of the family can increase the mother's confidence and comfort, thus speeding up the labor process and reducing the risk of complications (Rees et al., 2020).

In addition to emotional support, physical support is also something that is needed by mothers during labor. Family members who are present during labor can provide physical assistance, such as massage or positional support, which can help mothers cope with pain and discomfort that may arise (Ganapathy & Krishnamurthy, 2018). Furthermore, informational and decision support from the family also plays an important role in ensuring mothers get the right care that suits their needs. By providing accurate information and assisting in decision-making, families can help mothers feel more in control and have confidence during labor (Malacova et al., 2019).

Discussing the role of family in labor is important in the context of maternal and neonatal health care. The support provided by the family can have a positive impact on the mother's birth experience, as well as on the well-being and development of the newborn. Therefore, it is important for healthcare providers to recognize and support the role of the family in the birth process (Renfrew et al., 2014).

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the role of family support during childbirth plays a crucial role in the well-being of both the mother and the newborn baby. Emotional support from family members can reduce stress and anxiety levels experienced by the mother, leading to a more positive childbirth experience. Additionally, physical support during labor can help minimize complications and shorten the duration of labor. Moreover, the support provided by family members extends beyond childbirth and into the postpartum period, where it can facilitate the mother's physical and emotional recovery and aid in caring for the newborn. This underscores the importance of strong family support systems in promoting the overall health and well-being of both mothers and newborns. From a clinical perspective, healthcare providers should recognize the significant impact of family support during childbirth and postpartum care. They should provide education and resources to family members on how to best support mothers during labor and the postpartum period. Additionally, healthcare providers should offer counseling and support services to help families navigate the challenges they may face during this critical time. In essence, fostering strong family support systems can lead to improved maternal and neonatal outcomes, contributing to healthier and happier families overall.

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