

Association between a sense of privacy and safety, and decreased pain during childbirth

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Introduction

When a woman enters the hospital to give birth, the images she's watched all her life on media, combined with the sterile and unfamiliar setting of the hospital, and lack of privacy, may intensify feelings of fear and anxiety, which may lead to increased pain and trauma during labor. While it's fair to say that each woman should be empowered to choose whatever birth plan makes her feel safe and comfortable, women in the west are largely disempowered when it comes to what positive experiences they can have during labor.



(Western Portrayal)

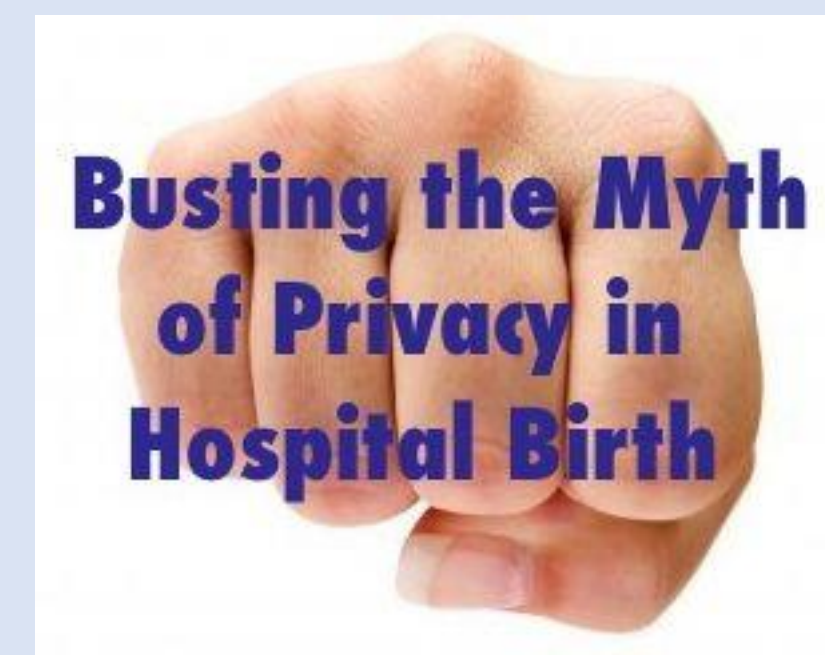
Research Question

How important is a woman's sense of safety and privacy to her experienced pain levels during childbirth? There are typically many people involved in the birth who are complete strangers. It has also become popular to have an audience of family or friends present to witness the birth. Birth is an important biological process every human experiences, either as the mother or the child, and there may be more important implications for how the birth experience affects the lives of the mother and child for years to come.

Background and Literature

In 2015, a literary review by Lorel Mayberry explored pleasurable birth experiences. In one survey, 32 out of 151 women experienced an orgasm during labor (Mayberry, 2015). In 2003, Buckley researched the orchestra of different hormones, both for stress and pleasure, that are released during labor. What can we learn about these positive experiences that may help women have the best birth experience possible?

"Cruelty in Maternity Wards: Fifty Years Later", discusses personal accounts of patients and nurses who were victims of or who witnessed abuse in maternity wards (Goer, 2010). Judith Lothian discusses the importance of privacy in labor in her article (Lothian, 2004).



Method

Sense of Safety- Oxford dictionary: "The condition of being protected from or unlikely to cause danger, risk, or injury".

Sense of Privacy: Physical privacy includes: Unshared birth and recovery room, and ability to refuse vaginal examinations or other procedures. *Social privacy* includes: mother's ability to control who comes into the room and how many people, knocking before entering, mother's ability to vocalize and move around freely, choose labor position, intimate alone time for mother and baby and father immediately after birth, and option for mother or father to bathe newborn for first time. (Rados, 2015)

Pain Level During Childbirth: "an unpleasant sensory and emotional experience associated with actual or potential tissue damage" (Lopez Correia, 2017)

A textual analysis would allow me to look for recurring themes that would strengthen or weaken my hypothesis. I also plan to use material that is opposed to the notion of pleasurable birth. Further investigation on how privacy and safety can promote reduced pain is needed. My proposed audience would be health care providers and those interested in alternatives to traditional western childbirth practices.

Expected Results

Based on the information I will be analyzing in my textual analysis; I expect to find evidence that suggests privacy and safety perception can be improved in order to reduce pain levels during labor.



(What's Possible)

Significance

Ideally, I would be able to survey or interview post partum women to ask specific questions related to my research questions, to get a more direct analysis of the phenomena. Since access to participants is limited, a textual analysis will allow for an exploration of what research can be done in the future.

References

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