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Mothers' experiences on normal vaginal delivery: a phenomenological study at Teaching Hospital, Peradeniya

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Introduction: Giving birth to a baby is a wonderful experience in the universe. In normal vaginal delivery, the baby comes out through the birth canal under the natural process. Although labour is unique, mothers' experiences can vary from a woman to woman. These experiences may directly affect on mothers' health, caring of the baby and their subsequent pregnancies. Therefore, it is of paramount importance to study their experiences to enhance the quality of life of pregnant mothers and their babies. Thus, this study aimed to explore the experiences of mothers who had undergone normal vaginal delivery at the Teaching Hospital, Peradeniya.

Methodology: A qualitative phenomenological design was used for this study. Purposively selected 15 primi- mothers, aged 18- 40 years were recruited as the sample. Ethical approval was granted by the Ethics Review Committee of the Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, University of Peradeniya. After obtaining the informed consent from each voluntary participant, in depth interviews were conducted to

examine their labour related experiences. The data was analyzed using thematic analysis method.

Results: Physical discomforts; emotional experiences; environmental influences; and health care influences were the themes (four) derived from the data. Mothers have suffered from physical discomforts including labour pain, back pain, thirst, hunger, sweating, vomiting, regurgitation, frequent urination and passing stools. Further they highlighted their emotional experiences such as anxiety, shame, loneliness, as well as, happiness, satisfaction, and feeling of fullness. Furthermore, environmental factors of the labor room including sounds, light, odor, ventilation, wetness, temperature, beds, monitors, and other equipment had increased the anxiety and stress in them. Moreover, health care influences such as good communication and the support by nurses and midwives had facilitated the labor.

Discussion: Mothers had experienced various physical discomforts during their labor including pain, thirsty,

hunger, vomiting which were similar to the findings of Hang (2015). Women had suffered emotionally from both negative and positive feelings. Similarly, Nishanthi (2016) have found that mothers experienced anxiety and loneliness, but surprisingly those were disappeared and filled with happiness with the presence of the baby. Environmental factors had increased the anxiety and stress of mothers (Nilsson, 2014) while effective communication skills with a supportive companion of nurses and midwives during childbirth had facilitated labor as emphasized by Bowers (2002).

Conclusion: Mothers are suffering from physical, emotional and environmental factors during labour. Effective communication skills and the support of both nurses and midwives facilitate the labour effectively. Further studies are required to explore the areas of pain management techniques and other advancement of labour room facilities.

Key words: experience, labour, labour room, normal vaginal delivery, primimother

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