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Experience of male adolescents and young adults with respect to the puerperium of their partners: an exploratory-descriptive study

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ABSTRACT

Aim: to understand the experience of adolescents and young adults in terms of the postpartum period of their companions as part of the Family Health Strategy. **Method:** This is a descriptive exploratory study, using a qualitative approach, developed in the family health units in the city of Caicó, Rio Grande do Norte. Respondents will be male adolescents and young adults who are accompanying their partners in the indirect postpartum period. A semi-structured interview will be used as the data collection technique. The information collected will be assessed using Grounded Theory and interpreted by symbolic interaction. **Expected results:** from the analysis of adolescents' and young adults' experience, we intend to delineate nursing actions that could be developed with regard to this group in the postpartum period. It is also intended to foster discussions to strengthen male involvement and the improvement of nursing care in terms of health care for the family as a whole.

Descriptors: Men; Postpartum Period; Family Health.

PROBLEM SITUATION AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

Becoming a father is part of an interrelationship process established between two individuals. During this process, transformation and changes are experienced, and people necessarily seek a new identity to express their new role and, in the case of men, their role as a father. However, when paternity occurs during adolescence or youth, it can reveal a vulnerability factor because the burden of responsibility can trigger physiological and emotional problems⁽¹⁾.

Male participation during pregnancy and in the postpartum period contributes to the recovery of the partner's health and the formation of emotional bonds between father-mother-child. It is observed that postpartum is physiologically experienced by women; however, men participate in this process socially within the family, by helping with household chores, taking care of the newborn and the partner. Men act as fathers by putting the baby to sleep, by bathing it, and changing diapers, thus becoming co-participants in these interactions, during which the partner may have difficulty in dealing with the new⁽²⁾.

It is understood that, by experiencing the postpartum of their partners, male adolescents and young adults perceive themselves as non-active subjects in this process. Most of the time, mothers direct their attention to the newborn and they are also going through a time of postpartum recovery, and therefore are unable to engage in physical and sexual activities⁽³⁾. Fatherhood is an ongoing and dynamic process based on the participation of men in various relationships as part of their families; therefore, male participation in the postpartum period provides security for their partners and allows immediate interaction with their child.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

What are the experiences of adolescents and young adults in terms of the postpartum period as it affects their partner? How is the father-mother-child relationship developed in the postpartum period? What actions are carried out by adolescents and young adults in the postpartum period of their partners?

AIMS

General: to understand the experience of male adolescents and young adults over the postpartum of their partners.

Specific: to identify the meaning of the postpartum for male adolescents and young adults; to describe the role of male adolescents and young adults in the postpartum period; to analyze the actions taken by male adolescents and young adults in the family context during the postpartum period.

METHOD

This is an exploratory and descriptive study using a qualitative approach, which will be developed in 16 family health which provide the total prenatal service coverage in the city of Caicó, Rio Grande do Norte. Male teens and young adults who are accompanying their partners in the postpartum period will participate.

It is estimated that 21 participants will be interviewed (according to the records of the health units) in the period from June to December 2014. These individuals will meet the following inclusion criteria: male adolescents and young adults aged between 10 and 24, according to the age definition adopted by

the Ministry of Health and the World Health Organization (WHO); whose partners are in the late postpartum period, considered to be until the 45th day after delivery; who are registered in the records of the basic health units; and who have made at least one prenatal consultation in the municipality. Exclusion criteria are: men who leave the interview during data collection and those who are not present for interview on the scheduled date.

The research instrument is a semi-structured interview script, consisting of two parts. The first part is related to the characterization of the respondents, while the second part is a guiding question aimed to meet the specifications of the proposed objectives. The question to be addressed to the deponents is: 'tell me how you have experienced the postpartum along with your partner'. The interviews will be recorded using an MP4 recording device after a voice recording authorization form has been signed by the participant.

Data collection occurred from July to September 2015. The information collected will be assessed using a Grounded Theory approach. At this stage a constant comparison between the data from the open, axial and selective coding for defining categories will be carried out. After categorization, the data will be analyzed based on Symbolic Interactionism, and discussed according to findings in the literature on male participation in the postpartum period context.

The study was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte under Protocol No. 1,011,896 according to Resolution 466/12 of the National Health Council.

EXPECTED RESULTS

From the analysis of adolescent and young adult experience, we intend to outline nursing actions that could be developed for use in the postpartum period. We also want to encourage discussions to strengthen male involvement and the improvement of nursing care in terms of health care for the family as a whole.

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