



**OBJN**  
Online Brazilian Journal of Nursing

**ENGLISH**

Federal Fluminense University

AURORA DE AFONSO COSTA  
NURSING SCHOOL



## Social representations of motherhood created by pregnant women of the prison system: a descriptive study

Anderson Brito de Medeiros<sup>1</sup>, Glauber Weder dos Santos Silva<sup>1</sup>, Thaís Rosental Gabriel Lopes<sup>1</sup>, Tássia Regine de Moraes Alves<sup>1</sup>, Jovanka Bittencourt Leite de Carvalho<sup>1</sup>, Francisco Arnaldo Nunes de Miranda<sup>1</sup>

*1 Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte*

### ABSTRACT

**OBJECTIVE:** To identify the social representations of motherhood from pregnant and lactating women in the prison system. **METHOD:** qualitative study, anchored in the assumptions of the Theoretical Paradigm of Social Representations in the structural aspect, with the presence of the central core theory and mute zone. The research will be developed at the female prisons of the state of Rio Grande do Norte. For data collection, the sociodemographic questionnaire and the Free Word Association Technique will be used. Later, lexical analysis and the analysis of central and dispersion trends will be performed. **EXPECTED RESULTS:** We expect to identify the social representations of motherhood by pregnant and lactating women in the prison system, from the symbolic world of these women who consolidate themselves as mothers in the world of the incarceration system. Then, we are aimed at making this topic tangible and, consequently, provide the perspective of health policies in this context, as well as providing a deep reflection on behalf of nursing professionals.

**Keywords:** Nursing; Pregnancy; Lactation; Prisoners; Social Psychology.

---

## **PROBLEM SITUATION AND SIGNIFICANCE:**

Motherhood in prison re-signifies the mother role with harshness, given the singularities of pregnancy. This circumstance may lead women to develop mental and physical illness as a result of the social isolation provided by incarceration<sup>(1)</sup>.

The situations found in the prison scenario by women in the postpartum/pregnancy period potentialize their vulnerabilities, since their specificities in this period are weakened and omitted by the system. It can also be emphasized that this context presents the dichotomy of family ties from the separation of the mother-child dyad, which can trigger irreparable damage to their lives<sup>(1)</sup>.

Considering the biological context of women during pregnancy and after labor, jail presents complex factors in the development of motherhood, encompassing often irreversible and remarkable results in the mother and child dyad. Among these, it is possible to mention violence against pregnant women within incarceration itself (omission of assistance and care), which triggers conditions such as hypertension and gestational diabetes; infections, bleeding; prematurity and low birth weight<sup>(1)</sup>. From the perspective of female incarceration, it is necessary to transform the execution of the sentence into a better experience within prison, in order to allow for the indispensable care for pregnancy and to obtain better outcomes in the period. The phenomenon of incarcerated pregnant or lactating women hides the primary concepts of the human being, since the environment does not match the basic human needs, nor the state of a pregnant woman/mother<sup>(2)</sup>.

As a social being, women in prison need to have their rights and duties guaranteed, according to the Brazilian Federal Constitution. In addition, they must have access to their reproductive health with the guarantee of safe motherhood, as well as the right to start a family with bond strengthening. However, these rights are ignored or neglected in the prison system, which interferes with the monitoring and health care in its totality<sup>(2)</sup>.

In this circumstance, although we are aware of the incongruities in the social configurations of nursing as a protagonist of care, it holds the necessary principles for the applicability, maintenance and evaluation of health care of each individual in their totality, regardless of the scenario<sup>(3)</sup>.

In general, nurses present themselves as protagonists in this scenario to solidify care as something intrinsic to the profession, since their role in the prison system is to assist, monitor and develop strategies for women health promotion and prevention, in addition to preventing health problems that may compromise their health<sup>(3)</sup>.

## **GUIDING QUESTION**

What are the social representations of motherhood by pregnant and lactating women in the incarceration system?

## **OBJECTIVE**

To identify the social representations of motherhood from pregnant and lactating women in the prison system.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This is a qualitative study, anchored in the assumptions of the Theoretical Paradigm of

Social Representations, based on the structural aspect, with the presence of the Central Core Theory and the Mute Zone.

The research will be carried out at public female prisons in the state of Rio Grande do Norte, which are under the responsibility of the State Secretariat of Justice and Citizenship, from February to August 2019, with incarcerated pregnant and lactating women, based on the following inclusion criteria: pregnant women or who are breastfeeding, regardless of prison regime, and exclusion criteria: women who for other reasons (personal/criminal) cannot be in common space for visits, women with signs suggestive of pregnancy.

For data collection, we will use two authorial instruments built and organized for this research. The first instrument is a structured questionnaire of closed and open questions about the sociodemographic profile and health history of the women of the study. The second is an interview, which will be conducted from the structural perspective of social representations to visualize the central and peripheral core in the construction of the study.

The use of the Free Word Association Technique, which starts with an inductive term designated by the researcher followed by the prototype analysis, is aimed at characterizing the evocations of words that appear in the organization of the answers to list the central and peripheral element of representation, which is calculated based on word frequency and category development.

Initially, the answers from the sociodemographic questionnaire and health background will be considered and their trends (central

and dispersion), mean, median, mode and standard deviation will be analyzed with the aid of *Microsoft Office Excel*® v.2016 and Statistical Package for the Social Sciences 20.0 (SPSS) software. In prototype processing, mean average frequencies and ranks of word utterances in interviews will be calculated automatically from an inductive term by the *Software Interface de R pour les Analyses Multidimensionnelles de Textes et de Questionnaires* (IRAMUTEQ), version 7 alpha 2.

This study is linked to the master's project of the Graduate Nursing Program of the Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte, submitted to the UFRN Ethics and Research Committee (CEP), under the opinion with the CAAE number of 08005219.7.0000.5537, on April 24, 2019, in accordance with the Resolution 466/2012.

## EXPECTED OUTCOMES

To identify the social representations of motherhood from pregnant and lactating women in prison. In addition, this work is intended to make the topic tangible and, consequently, provide the perspective of health policies in this context. It is believed that the representational results of this research will provide a deep, albeit local, reflection on the private jail of pregnant and lactating women by nursing professionals and, therefore, it is expected that the understanding of the context of the study will lead to the improvement of quality of care provided by nursing professionals.

## REFERENCES

1. Diuana V, Marilena CDV, Ventura M. Mulheres nas prisões brasileiras: tensões entre a ordem disciplinar punitiva e

as prescrições da maternidade. *Physis Revista de Saúde Coletiva* (online) [internet]. 2017 Jan 21 [Cited 2019 Jun 5] 27(3). Available from: [http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?pid=S0103-73312017000300727&script=sci\\_abstract&lng=pt](http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?pid=S0103-73312017000300727&script=sci_abstract&lng=pt).

2. Félix RS, França DJR, Nunes, JT, Cunha ICBC, Davim RMB, Pereira JB. O enfermeiro na atenção pré-natal às mulheres em sistema carcerário. *Rev enferm UFPE* (online) [internet]. 2017 Out [Cited 2019 Jun 5] 11(10). Available from: [file:///C:/Users/cliente/Downloads/15187-69709-1-PB%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/cliente/Downloads/15187-69709-1-PB%20(1).pdf).

3. Silva ICN, Santos MVS, Campos LCM, Silva DO, Porcino CA, Oliveira JF. Social representations of health care by homeless people. *Rev Esc Enferm USP*. 2018 Nov 21 [Cited 2019 Jun 04] 52(e03314). Available from: [http://www.scielo.br/pdf/reeusp/v52/en\\_0080-6234-reeusp-S1980-220X2017023703314.pdf](http://www.scielo.br/pdf/reeusp/v52/en_0080-6234-reeusp-S1980-220X2017023703314.pdf).

## **AUTHOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH**

Medeiros AB, Silva GWS and Lopes TRG contributed to the conception, project construction, research, writing of the article, and data analysis and interpretation; Alves TRM, Carvalho JBL and Miranda FAN collaborated with data interpretation, article writing, critical review, as well as final version approval.

Received: 2019/06/28

Reviewed: 2019/07/10

Approved: 2019/10/07

**Copyright © 2018 Online  
Brazilian Journal of Nursing**



This article is under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License CC-BY-NC-ND, which only permits to download and share it as long the original work is properly cited.