

Abstract Details

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Abstract title:

Postnatal home follow-up by a midwife to support perinatal bereavement: a qualitative evaluation of a French care system

Biography

I have been a midwife for over 30 years. But also a clinical psychologist and researcher associated with the research centre on work and development at the CNAM university as a doctor in psychosociology of work. One of my research subjects concerns women's health.

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Background

The 2011 Lancet series on stillbirth described it as a traumatic loss whose severity is worldwide underestimated in public health care. It encouraged action by health care providers and research. Currently, on discharge from hospital, a major French maternity hospital systematically offers postnatal follow-up at home by a midwife for all women and parents facing perinatal death beyond 15 weeks' pregnancy

Objectives

The first objective of this qualitative research is to identify the forms of support provided by the midwife. The second objective is to promote the sustainability of this home care through this evaluation.

Methods

This follow-up needs midwives which agree with it because the health insurance system does not cover it. So, Each midwife is a volunteer and signs an ethical charter of commitment validated by the different participating departments, in particular the maternity hospital and the perinatal health care network which coordinate the system. Every midwife fill in an anonymous tracking sheet detailing the home intervention. Women who agree to be contacted later for an interview proposal about their experiences give their telephone number anonymously. Training and support for perinatal bereavement are offered to the caregivers participating in the system sets up. It conforms with the ethical rules of the Helsinki declaration and with those of digital data protection.

Results

First qualitative data collected for about 30 situations and 5 interviews show the important time spent at parents' home for each midwife : for physical care, information exchange and emotional support. The women say that they feel less isolated or abandoned by the caregivers and more socially recognized for the loss of their child.

Conclusions

After discharge from hospital, postnatal home care by a midwife maintains continuity of global care and provides support to women and parents facing perinatal bereavement

Key message

The midwife is a key actor in postnatal bereavement support

Keywords:

Postpartum care

Mental health

Continuity of care