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Increased Maternal Autonomy During Midwife Assisted Home Births

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Abstract
Objective: To identify the relationship between home births and maternal autonomy, postpartum satisfaction, and neonatal Apgar scores.

Design: Quasi-experimental, Descriptive

Setting: Precious Beginnings Midwifery Care in Hutchinson and Wichita Kansas

Participants: Mothers who have had home births up to two years ago with Precious Beginnings Midwifery Care

Results/Conclusions: Pending results and data collection

Introduction
During pregnancy education about the birthing experience and the options available is an important part of the patients care plan. According to Cheyney et al. (2014) from the Midwives Alliance of North America, home births rose by 41% between 2004 and 2010 while births outside of the hospital only occurred 1.18% of the time in the United States. Women who have chosen to give birth at home have stated that they desired autonomy and control over their birthing experience as well as wanting an intervention-free process that could not be provided in a hospital (Bernhard et al., 2014). Cheyney et al, also stated that midwife assistance in home birthing provides mother’s with medical support while still allowing them to be in control of the birthing experience. With the rise of home births it is important to educate mothers with research showing postpartum satisfaction and neonatal Apgar scores to increase knowledgeable autonomy.

Key Terms
Holding birth within one’s own home with assistance of a midwife. Apgar Score: Test to determine infant health against mortality done at one and five minutes after birth. Seven, eight, and nine are normal scores indicating the child is in good health. Scoring less would indicate need for medical intervention (Cheyney et al., 2014).

Post-partum Satisfaction: Mother’s perception of birthing process related to physical and emotional pleasure (Bernhard et al., 2014).

Framework
Swanson (1993) Theory of informed caring outlines five caring processes including knowing, being, working, doing, and maintaining belief (McKelsey, 2018).

Nursing care of a woman planning home birth includes finding a way to understand her desire for autonomy in the process (knowing), spending time developing her plan (being with), protecting and preserving her dignity (doing for), providing information and research in a clear manner (enabling), and support being provided postpartum for any outcome (maintaining belief).

Methodology
Research Design/Interventions
Design: Quasi-Experimental. Descriptive

IV: Home births
DV: Apgar scores, mother’s sense of autonomy, and personal satisfaction

Interventions: Chart review of Apgar scores from Precious Beginnings Midwifery Care in addition to reports of mother’s autonomy and postpartum satisfaction.

Proposed Research Question
Is there a significant relationship between having a home birth and experiencing increased levels of autonomy, postpartum satisfaction, and Apgar scores above seven?

Literature Sources
Research from Fleming et al. (2016) found that women who both planned and delivered at home had higher satisfaction rates during and after birth compared to women who did not. In a study from 2012 motivating factors for choosing home births included a desire to have more control over the process, more comfort experienced in familiar environment, ability to involve family, and ability to labour naturally (Murray-Davis et al., 2012).

Sample/Setting
Chart reviews and surveys of women who have had home births up to two years ago with Precious Beginnings Midwifery Care in Hutchinson and Wichita Kansas.

Ethical Considerations
Expanding IRB review by Precious Beginnings Midwifery Care in Hutchinson and Wichita Kansas. Fort Hays State Department of Nursing, and Fort Hays State University.

Data Collection
Aggregated chart data regarding Apgar scores will be collected from the database housed by the Precious Beginning Midwifery Care from over the previous two years and then be analyzed to discover the percentage of infants scoring a seven or above. Anonymous surveys will be sent to mothers who have used Precious Beginnings services in the last two years to ascertain perceptions regarding sense of autonomy during birthing process by answering yes or no as well as their postpartum satisfaction using a five-point rating scale.

Projected Data Analysis Method
A Wilcoxon signed rank sum test will be used to analyze data collected from the anonymous surveys filled out by the mothers in order to compare repeated measurements from the sample. It will also be used to group repeated measures such as Apgar Scores above 7, mother’s rating yes to experiencing a sense of autonomy, and mothers rating satisfaction as a four or higher on the scale of five.

Literature Findings
In Cheyney et al. (2014) study it was shown that a 41% increase took place in home births over a six-year period. Within this study results showed that out of 16,984 infants born at home only 1.5% scored less than seven on their five-minute Apgar score. The literature results showed women seeking out home births with assistance of midwives placed high value on being in the home births they choose, opt for midwife assistance over other medical intervention, and being able to labour naturally (McKenna & Symon, 2014). Literature findings also showed that mothers who were supported in their decision-making process both emotionally and with information, rated their overall experience as higher as well as reported higher postpartum satisfaction compared to mothers who did not feel supported (Fleming et al., 2016).

Results/Findings
In Cheyney et al. (2014) from the Midwives Alliance of North America, home births rose by 41% between 2004 and 2010 while births outside of the hospital only occurred 1.18% of the time in the United States. Women who have chosen to give birth at home have stated that they desired autonomy and control over their birthing experience as well as wanting an intervention-free process that could not be provided in a hospital (Bernhard et al., 2014). Cheyney et al. also stated that midwife assistance in home birthing provides woman’s with medical support while still allowing them to be in control of the birthing experience. With the rise of home births it is important to educate mothers with research showing postpartum satisfaction and neonatal Apgar scores to increase knowledgeable autonomy.

Participants:
Mothers who have had home births up to two years ago with Precious Beginnings Midwifery Care in Hutchinson and Wichita Kansas, Fort Hays State Department of Nursing, and Fort Hays State University.

Discussion
Implications For Nursing
If home birth is found to increase the mother’s autonomy, produce a rate of four or higher on a scale of five for postpartum satisfaction, and maintain Apgar scores of seven and above information regarding midwife assisted homebirths should be provided in the early birth planning process. As nurses it is important to support patients in ways that meet their individual needs which would include discussing all options and providing accurate education and resources.

Conclusion
Pending results and data collection. Other studies have found that home births can positively impact mother satisfaction and autonomy while still maintaining adequate Apgar scores for the child. For future research it is recommended to look at risk associated with pregnancy as well as conducting research on larger and more diverse populations such as urban areas. This research could potentially have greater implications when conducted over a wider range of subjects.

References

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