

Medicalization of Childbirth and Pregnancy

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Introduction:

The research topic that I have chosen to pursue is the **medicalization of childbirth and pregnancy**.

The act of being pregnant and the experience of birth has gone from a natural experience in life for women that they are a part of, to a medical illness that is happening to them. Therefore, pregnancy and birth have become medicalized. According to Weitz (2003), The term '**medicalization**' refers to two interrelated processes. The first part of the process giving behaviors or conditions medical meaning and the second part of the process is using medical practice to eliminate and control experiences. In the original thirteen colonies, midwives were the primary caregiver and childbirth was a natural event rather than a medical event (Rouse, 2010). Throughout the scope of this research, I will investigate local women's narratives on pregnancy and childbirth in order to answer the question '*Does the medicalization of childbirth and pregnancy impact what women expected to occur and what actually occurred during childbirth and pregnancy?*'.

Methods:

Upon finalizing my research, I have completed a literature review on the biomedical model of pregnancy and childbirth as well as information concerning the midwifery view of pregnancy and childbirth from obtaining pre-existing data research. To further my data collection, I used a method of one-on-one interviews of which I completed in person and through Zoom, to collect women's narratives and identify primary themes.

Sample:

I was able to choose eight women by attempting to have a variety of birth experiences. I also choose these eight specific women in order to have a variety of socio-demographic variables such as age, income, and education.

Significance:

This research has the ability to allow women to become better educated and informed about their choices regarding pregnancy and birth, as well as what they can actually expect. Collecting and gathering this data will not only allow for women to gain a better understanding about their choices and experiences but will also give health care providers a reference for '*Women's attitudes towards the medicalization of childbirth , pregnancy and delivery*'.

Conclusion:

I was unable to obtain the last interview in time to analyze my results. I believe that due to social distancing being put into place regarding the COVID-19 Virus it allowed for barriers that could later be resolved to complete this research

Interview Questions:

1. What was your relationship status at time of pregnancy/childbirth?
2. What age were you when you had your child(ren)?
3. What was your level of education at the time you had your child (High School Degree, Some College, College Degree)?
4. How did you choose your doctor? Hospital?
5. Once learning you were pregnant, did you perform any research about pregnancy and childbirth?
6. Can you tell me how you planned to labor/deliver/birth? What were your expectations?
7. What were your pregnancy visits like (what happened, did you understand why tests/exams were performed)?
8. What were your post-pregnancy visits like (what type of support did you receive from your doctor)?
9. What actually occurred during your labor and delivery (were you able to move freely, were medical interventions used)?
10. Do you feel that pregnancy was a calm experience, do you feel you were able to make decisions and have control over your experience?
11. Do you believe that your plans/expectations followed through with your lived experiences?
12. If the father was involved, what type of support was offered to him and was he included by the doctor or midwife during the visits?

References:

- Rouse, J. (2010). Indiana's Midwifery Statute and the Legal Barriers that Will Render It Unworkable. <http://dx.doi.org/10.18060/4806.0008>
- Weitz, R. (2003). Women and Medicalization from: The Politics of Women's Bodies: Sexuality, Appearance, and Behavior. New York, NY. Oxford Univ. Press.