

Postpartum Learning Needs as Perceived by Mothers at Suez Canal University Hospital

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Abstract: Background:Postpartum period is a serious period in a women's life and contains various changes which results in many learning needs that require working to be met. **Aim** of the study was to identify postpartum learning needs as perceived by mothers at Suez Canal University Hospital. **Design:** Descriptive design wasutilized in this study .**Setting:** The study was carried out in labor and postpartum units at Suez Canal University Hospital. **Sample:** A purposive sample of 300 mothers who were primipara and had a full term pregnancy. **Tools:** Two tools were used for data collection,a structured interview questionnaire for mothers, and Likert scale for assessment of postpartum learning needs from the perspective of mothers. **Results:** Most of studied mothers perceived that information about episiotomy care and C.S wound care, postpartum danger signs of mothers and newborns were important postpartum learning needs. 54.3%of mothers perceived that information about exercisewere important postpartum learning need.**Conclusion:**new mothers have many learning needs during postpartum period and nurses need to assess the mothers' learning needs before beginning the postpartum teaching that must be based on women's own learning needs. **Recommendation:** Develop and implement mothers classes during antenatal period about postpartum learning needs.

Key words: Postpartum - Learning needs –perspective.

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I. Introduction

The postpartum period is considered a critical time for a woman, her newborn, and her family. It is a dynamic time where the woman learns how to care for herself and her baby (**Negtalon- Ramos, 2014**). The Postpartum period is filled with strong emotions, physical changes, new and changed relationships, assumptions and adjustments into the new mother role which result in many health needs and concerns (**Durham &Champan, 2014**).

Learning needs are defined as the gap between what someone knowsand what someone needs to know(**Bastable, 2006**). After delivery, multiparous womanstill remember some aspects about self-care and baby care, whileaprimiparous woman needs to learn detailed information about her self-care and everything related to her newborn care (**Muarry & Mckinney, 2014**).

Fulfillment of learning needs throughout the shortened hospital stay of postpartum women seems to be a hard task for nurses who take care for these women. Assessment of the woman's learning needs is the first step helps nurse in meeting these needs ,make sure that woman is interested in the chosen topics for teaching and makes great use of the really short available time (**Walker et al., 2015**).

Nurses play many roles while implementing the nursing plan of postpartum care. They provide direct physical care, counseling , anticipatory guidance, and education about mother and baby care(**Perry et al., 2014**). A teaching plan must be designed with theinvolvement of women. Active participation of women increases their opportunity for learning. Repetition of skills increases information retention and mother's feelings of competence .As a result of a limited time available for teaching, nurses must direct their teaching toward expressed needs of the woman (**Muarry & Mckinney, 2014**).

Before discharge, the woman needs basic instructions regarding a variety of topics to be able to care for herself and her newborn, such as; recovery from the birth process, nutrition, infant feeding, perineal care and hygiene, gentle exercise and rest, postpartum warning signs, return of period, resumption of sexual intercourse and family planning, prescribed medication, and routine mother-baby checkup after discharge (**Littleton-Gibbs &Engebretson, 2013; WHO, 2013**).

At the end of postpartum teaching , nurses must ensure that the woman's own learning needs have been met and she has developed sufficient knowledge about the main topics to be safely discharged home

(Crowley, 2014).Lack of correct knowledge and practices during the postpartum period can result in harmful effect on women and their babies(Brasington et al., 2016).

Significance of the study:

Each woman after delivery has unique learning needs and concerns which differ regarding to the woman's parity, age, education, and expectation (Ladewig et al, 2014). Also, the nurse's perception of what is important for women to learn related to her self-care and baby care may be really different from the women's perspective of their own learning needs which is declared by (David et al., 2012), and (Obeisat et al., 2012) . Therefore, nurses must assess the woman's learning needs before starting of postpartum teaching. Accordingly, the importance of this study is maximized at Ismailia city,especially on Suez Canal University Hospital, where the research idea hadn't been conducted before. For this reason the current study was carried out and aimed to identify postpartum learning needs as perceived by mothersat theSuez Canal University Hospital.

II. Subjects and Methods

Study Design: A descriptive design was used in the current study.

Study setting: This study was conducted inlabor and postpartum units atthe Suez Canal University Hospital.

Sample Size: 300 mothers after exclusion of pilot study.

Sample size calculation: Sample size was determined according to the following equation: $n = \frac{Z^2 \times p \times (1 - P)}{C^2}$ (Triola, 2008).Where: n = sample size, Z = Z value (e.g. 1.96 for 95% confidence level), p = percentage picking a choice, expressed as decimal (.5 used for sample size needed), C = confidence interval, expressed as decimal (5.03). The sample size was300mothers.

Samplingmethod: A purposive sample of three hundred mothers delivered in the previous mentioned sitting at the time of data collection, and accepted to participate in the study.

Inclusion Criteria:

- 1- Primipara.
- 2- Had a full term pregnancy
- 3- Delivered by normal vaginal delivery or C.S.
- 4- Had single viable baby.

Exclusion Criteria:

- 1- Mothers who have any chronic diseases or any complication during pregnancy.

Procedure Methodology:

The purpose of the study was explained by the researcher to all nurses and mothers who were included in the study. The actual field work was carried out over a period of 8 months, which started from the beginning of January 2017 to the end of August 2017. The researcher was attending the study settings 6 days/week ,three days (Saturday, Monday, Wednesday) from 8.00 AM to 7.00 PM. The other 3days from 8.00AM to 10.00 AM. For mothers, the interview was occurringin the postpartum room. Each mother was individually interviewed using the previously mentioned study tools since 20-30 minutes.

Statistical design:

At the end of the field work,the collected data were organized, revised, stored, tabulated and analyzed using numbers and percentage distribution. Statistical analysis was done by computer using Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS) program version 20. Proper statistical tests were used to determine whether there was a significant statistical difference between variables of the study.

The following statistical techniques were used percentage; mean score degree \bar{X} , standard deviation SD.

III. Results

Table no 1.Shows the mothers socio-demographic characteristics, the mean age of the mothers was 22.12 ± 3.99 years, 64.3% of mothers, their age ranged from 20- 30 years, and about half of them (46.7%) had secondary education. 99% of the mothers were married and 93.3% of them were housewives. Regarding their family income, 57.7% of the mothers had enough income for their basic needs.

Table no. 2. Declared that the majority of the mothers (86.7%) reported that it was important for postpartum women to learn about affordable foods. 54.3 % of mothers stated that information about types of exercise was an important learning need for postpartum women.

Table no. 3. Reveals the mothers perception of learning needs regarding to postpartum danger signs. 99.3% of mothers stated that information about all items of postpartum danger signs except depressions were important postpartum learning needs.

Table no. 4. Declares the mother's perception of wound care and return to sexual relation learning needs, all mothers mentioned that episiotomy care was important learning need for postpartum women. Regarding the sexual relation, 75% of mothers reported that return to sexual relation was important learning need for women after birth.

Figure (1) Shows distribution of postpartum learning needs about newborn care as perceived by mothers; nearly all mothers perceived that information about newborn danger signs were important learning needs for postpartum women.

Distribution of mothers according to their socio- demographic characteristics(n=300).

Personal variable	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
20 years<	88	29.3
30 years<20 -	193	64.3
40 years<30 -	19	6.3
Mean ± SD	22. 12 ± 3.99	
Educational level		
Illiterate	48	16
Basic education	82	27.3
Secondary education	140	46.7
University education	30	10
Occupation		
Housewife	280	93.3
Employee	20	6.7
Residence		
Urban	157	52.3
Rural	143	47.7
Marital status		
Married	297	99
Divorced	3	1
Income		
Not enough for basic needs	120	40
Enough for basic needs	171	57
Enough for basic needs and save for it	9	3

Table no. 2. Distribution of mothers according to their perception of nutrition, and postpartum exercises learning needs.

Item	Mothers (n=300)			
	Important		Not important	
	N	%	N	%
Mother nutritional needs				
Allowable food postpartum	260	86.7	40	13.3
Affordable foods postpartum	260	86.7	40	13.3
Food that produces milk	258	86	42	14
Postpartum exercises				
Benefits of exercise	163	54.3	137	45.7
Types of postpartum exercises	163	54.3	137	45.7

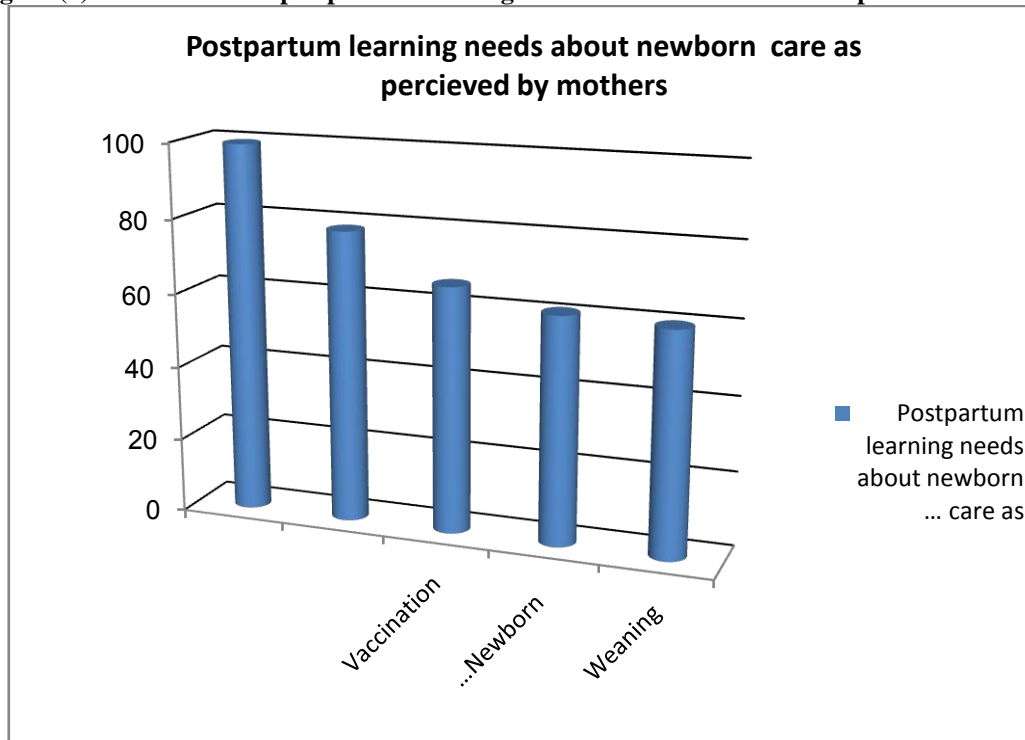
Table no. 3. Distribution of mothers according to their perception regarding to postpartum danger signs learning needs.

Postpartum danger signs	Mothers(n=300)			
	Important		Not important	
	N	%	N	%
Vaginal bleeding	298	99.3	2	0.7
Fever	298	99.3	2	0.7
Offensive vaginal discharge	298	99.3	2	0.7
Dyspnea	298	99.3	2	0.7
Blurred vision	298	99.3	2	0.7
Redness, pain ,swelling of leg	298	99.3	2	0.7
Depression	154	51.3	146	48.7

Table no.4. Distribution of mothers according to their perception of wound care and return to sexual relation learning needs.

Item	Mothers(n=300)			
	Important		Not important	
	N	%	N	%
Wound care				
Episiotomy(n=225)				
Episiotomy care	22	100	0	0.0
	5			
Signs of infection	22	100	0	0.0
	5			
C.S wound (n=75)				
C.S wound care and	75	100	0	0.0
signs of infection	75	100	0	0.0
Return to sexual relation	22	74	78	26
	2			

Figure (1): Distribution of postpartum learning needs about newborn care as perceived mothers.



IV. Discussion

The woman after delivery had many needs which must be met to enable women to care for herself and her new baby. The nurse is the primary resources that providing education for the mother, that can facilitate a more satisfying parenting mother experience and provide teaching based on the unique needs of the woman can facilitate the transition into the parenting role (Wilson, 2016).

When assessing mothers' nutritional learning needs, the present study revealed that, the majority of mothers reported that learning about nutrition was important for postpartum women, especially allowed and affordable foods during the postpartum period, and foods that may increase milk production. Study of (Shah et al., 2010) is congruent with the present study findings, they emphasize the importance of giving proper instructions by nurses about suitable nutrition during postpartum period as consumption of unhealthy foods may be initiated after delivery.

Also, (Negron et al., 2013) reported that the most three important mothers' concerns after birth were nutrition followed by sleeping and hygiene. Moreover, (Mahmoud et al., 2014) agrees with current results when they assessed nutritional learning needs of postpartum women in Cairo, they found that more than three quarter of women reported that they need to know allowed foods and other types that should be avoided during the postpartum period.

Current studied mothers' concern related to learning healthy foods should be consumed in the postpartum period, may be attributed to mothers' believes about harmful effect of certain foods on breast milk production or being secreted in breast milk and cause harm to the baby.

postpartum exercise is very important for women after delivery, it helps in decreasing weight, strengthen muscles, and enhance better psychological well-being and reduce postpartum depressive symptoms (Poyatos-León et al., 2017). The present study revealed that about half of mothers stated that information about postpartum exercise was not important learning needs. (El-Gamasy, 2015) contrast, current findings; who found more than two third of the studied women had the desire to learn postpartum exercise.

Moreover (Moustafa, 2012) stated that it is important for postpartum teaching to include counseling about exercise. This variation between results, may be due to cultural differences, and current studied mothers may haven't enough time to practice exercise, because they are busy with newborn care issues and other home duties that act as a barrier to practice exercise.

When investigating the need for learning about postpartum danger signs, present study declared that, nearly all mothers perceived that it is important for women after delivery to learn information about this issue. This result is in agreement with many other studies; (Obeisat et al., 2012), those authors reported that nurses and mothers perceived that danger signs are an important learning need in the postpartum period. In addition to

some studies revealed that from one to two third of women knew at least one key danger signs during postpartum period ,which reflect their need to learn about postpartum these signs (**Kabakyenga et al., 2011**) and (**Pembe et al., 2009**) .

Regarding wound care, all mothers delivered by normal vaginal delivery and C.S, stated that information about episiotomy care and C.S care were important learning needs for postpartum women. Similarly, (**David et al., 2012**) reported that most of mothers perceived that surgical wound care and perineal care are the most important learning needs. Many other studies are consistent with current study findings carried out by ; (**Fink, 2012**), (**Gazmararian et al., 2014**)and (**Martin et al., 2014**), in which the most important concern of study women was episiotomy care.

On the other hand ,some studies found that most of study sample know how to care of episiotomy and perineal discomfort by using a sitz bath (**Hassan, 2012**) and (**Francisco, 2010**). From the researcher point of view, this difference from current study results may be due to that current study mothers were primiparous and hadn't enough experience and knowledge about place and care of birth incision and sutures. This interpretation is also reported by (**Ladewig et al., 2014**) who stated that new mothers un aware with the place of episiotomy .

The present study demonstrated that, information about areturn to sexual relation was perceived by more than two third of mothers as an important postpartum learning need. (**Bakr, 2012**) findings look like the present study mothers result, which sexual concerns were present among one half of studyprimiparous women .On the other hand, (**Liu et al., 2009**) found more than half of a study control group of rural and urban women , had correct knowledge about time of return to assume intercourse.

In regard to newborn care, the present study declared that more than half of studymothers reported that it is important for women after giving birth to learn information about newborn care. The important learning needs were; how to avoid colic, normal elimination pattern, safety, eye care, sleeping habits, and deal with baby cry. (**Obeisat et al., 2012**) agree with current findings as both mothers and nurses mentioned that information about infant care, elimination pattern, and safety were important to be learned by postpartum women.

Moreover, (**Martin et al., 2014**), and (**Almalik, 2017**)mirror present findings as they found that the need for newborn care information was reported by the majority of the studied women .The other studies which are in agreement with current findings; (**Devolin et al., 2012**) , (**Webb et al., 2015**), (**Sword et al., 2012**)and(**Walker et al., 2015**) reported that, the most important women's concerns are general baby care, sleeping issues, baby safety and well- being, and how to comfort baby. Furthermore, (**Fahey & Shenassa, 2013**)reported that the most important mothers concerns in baby care were related to signs of illness , and baby feeding and calming.

Concerning the importance of breastfeeding education , more than two third of mothers perceived that, knowledge about breastfeeding is important learning need for postpartum women, Many studies agree with current findings; (**Martin et al., (2014)**, **Gazmararain et al., (2014)**, **Devolin et al., (2013)** and **Almalik, (2017)**) they reported that the first important women concern was breastfeeding.

In contrast to all previous findings, (**Fink, 2012**) study founded that a less important reported need of women was regarded to breast care and breastfeeding, this wide variation from current results can be attributed to only 14% of women participated in fink study were breastfeeding, but in current study all women want to complete breastfeeding for at least one year, thus they are interested in information about it.

V. Conclusionand recommendation

Based on the findings of the current study, it was concluded that; new mothers have many learning needs during postpartum period and nurses need to assess the mothers' learning needs before beginning the postpartum teaching that should be provided based on woman's own learning needs. Postpartum education must focus onthe physical needs of mothers and their newborns. The findings highlight the need for development and implementation of mother classes during antenatal period about postpartum learning needs.

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