

Mothers' experiences surrounding childbirth. A survey in Austrian Early Childhood Interventions

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Summary

Background

All over the world, women also have negative experiences during childbirth. This can subsequently lead to long-term health problems for the woman/parents, but also to negative effects on the relationship and bond with the newborn. In Austria, there is still no systematic survey on negative birth experiences. However, initiatives, in particular the "Roses Revolution" movement and its presence on social media, point to the relevance of the topic in Austria. As the topic is also relevant from the perspective of early help, the corresponding perceptions of mothers should be collected and analysed.

Method

Parents, mostly mothers, who participate in the NZFH.at feedback groups were asked about their birth experiences. In addition, an online survey was created, which is based on validated questionnaires (MADM, MOR-G, MIST) and contains further questions about birth, birth preparation and further support.

Results

The study shows that mothers have both positive and negative experiences during childbirth and provides an insight into the variety of experiences that are perceived as negative. In this online survey, positive assessments predominate, with up to a third of respondents giving (rather) negative assessments to individual questions/statements. Negative experiences relate to information and education as well as involvement in decisions and decision-making autonomy. In addition, mothers in Austria also experience a lack of respectful treatment and even care that does not conform to guidelines. The early childhood intervention networks can play an important role, in the preparation for birth as well as in dealing with negative experiences and organising specific support.

Conclusion

Overall, the picture is rather positive, although some mothers do have negative experiences. However, as those mothers in particular who, according to international studies, tend to have negative experiences, did not participate to a sufficient extent, the situation in Austria is probably less positive than it initially appears. Due to the potential health consequences associated with this, there is a need for action.

Keywords

Birth experiences, informed decision, respectful treatment, violence