

COVID-19: How the Pandemic has Changed Maternity Care Policy and Childbearing Experiences

Dear Editor,

I read the article by Kaur *et al.* about lactation and coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).^[1] This study has important implications, but there is no mention of maternal health problems and midwifery challenges during the pandemic. Among different fields of medicine, some, like clinical midwifery specialists, are more susceptible to COVID-19 dangers. The increased vulnerability arises from various variables. For instance, every pregnancy has some risk of difficulties, and medical care during pregnancy has its own uniqueness that sets it apart from many other healthcare sectors.

COVID-19-positive pregnant women have a greater risk of pregnancy complications, including premature birth, cesarean birth, and maternal death. Moreover, the global prevalence of perinatal depression and anxiety has considerably increased during COVID-19. Breastfeeding problems are another issue known as post-disaster trauma and are associated with low weight.^[2]

The pandemic has also posed unprecedented challenges to maternity care providers. These unfortunate experiences may be physical, like occupational exposure to the virus, or psychological, including fear of catching COVID-19.

Pandemic pressure has drastic effects on the daily working routine of midwifery services. Some changes can be beneficial for pregnant women, including less busy waiting rooms and eliminating low-value visits. Working remotely also provides additional time for women to spend on domestic tasks.

Nonetheless, some alterations may have negative consequences, including anxiety or dissatisfaction. These can be attributed to various factors, including the limited amount of time that maternity care providers spend on the patient's visit and staff shortages. Canceled appointment and limited or no access to child delivery patterns seems to increase the risk of conditions, including concern and confusion.^[1] Self-imposed isolation due to concerns about acting as a vector is a common problem for women and maternity care providers, imposing a specific emotional burden on everyone involved, regardless of their circumstances. To overcome these challenges, various strategies were adopted. Online training workshops are one of the important efforts to improve staff skills. An education program for pregnant women also promotes their awareness about COVID-19-related health issues. Healthcare organizations must follow WHO guidelines for managing and preventing COVID-19. Improving support services for parents with neonates and young children

during the pandemic is another important aspect that must be considered.^[3]

Overall, maternity care had been accompanied by substantial reconfiguration and many shifts in clinical care pathways during the pandemic. These changes can have a negative or positive impact on the physical and psychological health of women before, during, and after pregnancy. Therefore, research on this subject could help enhance the quality of the planning process, allowing more rapid and coordinated responses to the outbreak.

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Conflicts of interest

Nothing to declare.

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