

Involving Fathers in Maternity Care: Best Practice



Dr Mostafa Nokani


Clinical psychologist

Dr Alireza Saghafi

Psychiatrist

Dr Raha Barati

Psychiatrist

- 
-
- There is cumulative evidence that demonstrates that when men are involved during pregnancy, birth and the early postnatal period this can significantly affect the health and well-being of women and their babies.



Training staff to support fathers

- There is a move towards engaging better with fathers.
- It also specifies the importance of staff being trained to **support fathers**, and possess skills for **engaging with fathers** as well as mothers.



Midwives training

- Midwives well placed to engage with fathers
- Fisher (2007) confirmed “no other health or family service other than maternity achieves remotely this level of connection with men in their role as carers of children”

What Fathers think of Midwives?

- Singh & Newburn (2003) assessed what men think of midwives and reported most have positive opinions and highlighted the need for holistic care for mothers & fathers



Involving fathers in pregnancy

- Pregnancy associated - high levels of stress & anxiety for men (Condon et al, 2004; Johnson and Baker, 2004; Rosich-Medina & Shetty, 2007)
- Men became the channel of communication with professionals, shielding their partner, eg. phoning for test results. (Locock & Alexander 2006)
- Early involvement with fathers in pregnancy – major impact on the future relationship between father and child (Henwood & Proctor, 2003; Santos Perez et al, 1998).

Involving fathers in pregnancy

- Most men rely on second hand information passed on by their partners (Locock & Alexander, 2006).
- Expectant fathers need access to a professional to answer questions during pregnancy (Finnbogadottir & Svalenius, 2003)
- Men's attendance at scans now appears to be a widely accepted part of pregnancy
- Draper (2002) identified importance of ultrasound for helping men to visualise the baby & realise their transition to fatherhood.



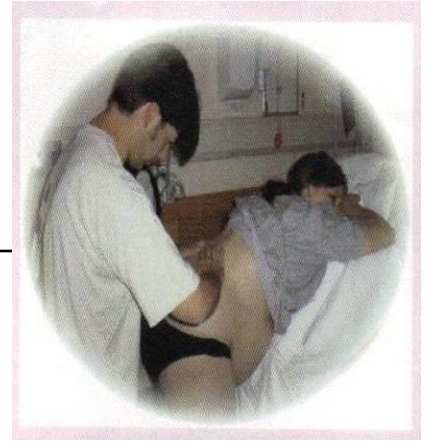
Involving fathers in A/N Education

- Diamer (1998) - a correlation with A/N education specially designed for fathers to > the likelihood of their support with housework, more likely to 'reason' with their partners, better relationships
- Hallgren et al, (1999) education found to be effective in preparing fathers to take active roles at the birth.

Involving Fathers in Birth

- (Wockel et al,2007)Well-Prepared fathers - Positive effect & > positive birth experience & fears of seeing their partners in pain were less.
- “how much a man trusts other carers and how much he trusts the woman’s body to be able to give birth will have an influence on his understanding and fear within the situation” (Downe, 2004)

Involving Fathers in Birth



- Latifses et al, (2005) teaching massage or relaxation techniques - effective way to > marital satisfaction & decrease depressive symptoms

Involving Fathers in Birth

- Erlandsson et al, (2007) showed skin-to-skin contact with the father after caesarean section babies were more likely to stop crying, became calmer,





Involving Fathers after birth

- Abramowitz et al, (2001) - first report describing (OCD) in fathers
- Maternal Post natal depression strong predictor of paternal Post natal depression and at > risk if unemployed & relationship problems (Bria et al, 2008).
- Madsen & Juhk (2007) Better methods for identifying men with Post natal depression need to be developed

Summary of Guidelines:

Antenatal:

- Respect women's choices at all times
- Midwives need to explore, reflect on their attitudes, beliefs, practice : involving fathers in care
- Midwives make fathers feel welcome & involved
- Some flexibility for easier access to A/N care
- Fathers like mothers, are open to professional information and advice at this time
- Document health advice, guidance given to both

Summary of Guidelines for midwives:

Antenatal:

- Greet him by his name - document his name in hand-held notes
- Encourage attendance & include them more in parenting education
- Offer fathers opportunities to discuss their thoughts & feelings about changes they are facing
- Be sensitive to the needs, concerns of both expectant parents - < anxiety & stress
- Create opportunities for fathers to ask questions

Summary of Guidelines:

Childbirth:

- Respect, be aware of religious, cultural beliefs associated with birth
- Fathers need to be well informed about the benefits of providing companionship & support
- Need to prepare fathers for an active role
- Encourage fathers to use massage & relaxation techniques



Summary of Guidelines:

Childbirth:

- Discuss & inform fathers of any complications
- Fathers should be main care provider during mother-baby separation
- Encourage skin-to-skin contact to promote bonding & development of pre-feeding behaviour

Summary of Guidelines:

Following birth:

- Support them to support their partner & infant.
- Raise awareness - risk of fathers suffering PND & assess health - well-being of both
- Provide, promote health education regarding breastfeeding benefits & issues
- If the mother decides not to B/F ensure both have skills to safely prepare formula feeds

Summary of Guidelines:

Following birth:

- Make opportunities to explore & discuss both - mother's, father's experience of birth, early parenting
- Provide information, support, guidance and reassurance at regular intervals
- Develop clear referral P/N pathways



Conclusions:

- Most women want their partners to become involved in all areas of maternity care.
- Many men want to be involved in their partner's pregnancy, birth and fully participate in baby care
- Vast amount of evidence of benefits when fathers are involved in their partners pregnancy, birth and following birth

Being a Family

