

Stories of Support: A Qualitative Exploration of Spousal Engagement among Expectant Mothers in their Third Trimester of Pregnancy

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Abstract

This study aimed to explore the lived experiences of expectant mothers in their third trimester of pregnancy, specifically focusing on spousal engagement and its impact on maternal health and spousal relationships.

This qualitative research used an interpretive approach to explore the experiences of ten expectant mothers in their third trimester of pregnancy. Purposive sampling was used to select participants. Semi-structured, face-to-face, in-depth interviews were conducted to gather data, supplemented by audio recording. The data collected were transcribed and analyzed to identify themes and categories. Three main themes and nine categories were identified. The first theme, Spousal Support and Involvement, consisted of emotional support, physical presence, and financial support. This theme indicated that spousal support and involvement provided mothers with reassurance and security. The second theme, Maternal Emotional Well-being, consisted of feelings of safety, reduced anxiety, and maternal confidence. This theme indicated that spousal support and involvement provided a protective buffer for mothers to feel safe and confident during childbirth. The third theme, Relationship Changes, consisted of improved communication, emotional changes, and challenges in spousal involvement. This theme indicated that pregnancy resulted in improved communication between spouses and emotional changes for both mothers and spouses.

This study found that spousal engagement in the third trimester is multidimensional and highly significant for maternal health and spousal relationships. Emotional support, physical presence, and financial support were significant for maternal health. Early communication between spouses improved relational stability and maternal confidence.

It is recommended that spousal involvement be integrated into prenatal health care to promote maternal health.