Revista de Enfermagem do Centro-Oeste Mineiro 2017;7:e1987 DOI: 10.19175/recom.v7i0.1987 www.ufsj.edu.br/recom



AS INTERFACES DAS VIVÊNCIAS DA PRIMEIRA EXPERIÊNCIA DE MÃES ADOLESCENTES E ADULTAS

THE INTERFACES OF ADOLESCENT AND ADULT MOTHERS FIRST EXPERIENCE

LAS INTERFACES DE LAS VIVENCIAS DE LA PRIMERA EXPERIENCIA DE MADRES ADOLESCENTES Y ADULTAS

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RESUMO

Objetivo: compreender os significados da maternidade para as mães adolescentes e adultas, primíparas, desvelando sua rede de apoio na vivência desta experiência. Método: trata-se de uma pesquisa descritiva, exploratória, de abordagem qualitativa, com participação de 11 mães primíparas, sendo cinco, adolescentes de 10 e 19 anos e seis, adultas de 20 aos 40 anos. Para a coleta dos dados, foi utilizado um roteiro com questões semiestruturadas, segundo o conteúdo Bardin, 2011, para organização e análise dos dados. **Resultados:** percebeu-se que a maternidade gerou modificações no viver das mães como: alterações físicas e no seu cotidiano e de sua família com a chegada do bebê. A rede de apoio mostrou-se essencial pelo amparo e consolo nas dificuldades a serem enfrentadas. **Conclusão:** para as mães analisadas, o significado da maternidade refere-se ao cuidado, ao carinho e ao apego pelo(a) filho(a); e os principais desafios da maternidade são os cuidados demandados com a criança, cujas dificuldades são amenizadas pela rede de apoio, que tem uma função muito importante, desde níveis emocionais a financeiros, na vivência da primeira experiência de ser mãe.

Descritores: Gravidez; Maternidade; Saúde da mulher.

ABSTRACT:

Objective: to understand the meanings of motherhood for adolescent and adult mothers, both primiparous, revealing their support network in this experience. **Method:** This is a descriptive, exploratory, qualitative approach research, involving 11 primiparous mothers; five of them adolescents with 10 and 19 years old; and six adults between 20 and 40 years old. For the data collection, the study used a script with semi-structured questions, according to Bardin content, 2011, for data organization and analysis. **Results:** the study showed that motherhood generated changes in the mothers' lives such as physical changes and in their daily life and in their family with the baby arrival. The support network was essential to support and console them in the difficulties they face. **Conclusion:** for the analyzed mothers, the meaning of motherhood refers to care, affection and attachment to the child. The main motherhood challenges are the care demanded with the child that the support network soften, having a very important function, from emotional to financial levels, in this first experience of being a mother.

Descriptors: Pregnancy; Parenting; Women's health.

RESUMEN:

Objetivo: comprender los significados de la maternidad para las madres adolescentes y adultas, primíparas, desvelando su red de apoyo en la vivencia de tal experiencia. **Método:** se trata de una investigación descriptiva, exploratoria, de abordaje cualitativo, con participación de 11 madres primíparas, cinco adolescentes de 10 y 19 años, y seis adultas de 20 a 40 años. Para la recolección de los datos, se utilizó un itinerario con cuestiones semiestructuradas, utilizando análisis de contenido (Bardin, 2011) para organización y análisis de los datos. **Resultados:** se percibió que la maternidad generó modificaciones en el vivir de las madres como alteraciones físicas y en su cotidiano y de su familia, con la llegada del bebé. La red de apoyo se mostró esencial a través del amparo y consuelo en las dificultades a ser enfrentadas. **Conclusión:** para ellas, la maternidad significa cuidado, cariño y apego por el hijo, y los principales desafíos de la maternidad son el cuidado con el niño, pero tal dificultad se suaviza con la red de apoyo que tiene una función muy importante en diferentes niveles, sea emocional o financiero en la vivencia de la primera experiencia de ser madre. **Descriptores:** Embarazo; Responsabilidad parental; Salud de la mujer.

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INTRODUCTION

Motherhood is a unique experience for the and woman, she suffers different paradigms transformations, changing perspectives that shape not only their physical body, but especially their way of thinking and perceiving the world⁽¹⁾. In the past, women got married too early and soon became mothers, staying strictly linked to the domestic environment. In most of the traditionalist families, only the son had the opportunity to study, while the woman did not have this possibility to see the world surrounding her⁽²⁾.

In this perspective, traditionalism also pervades the male white society, and it gives possibilities only to men, since women also gave in to their partners' wishes. In the affection look the way the relationship is established, in romantic love, the idea that this attitude would be an invention of men emerges, to influence women with utopias and enchantment⁽³⁾.

Over time, the woman entered the labor market, increasing their rights, but without leaving aside motherhood, regardless of age. Although pregnancy is highly valued, currently, is not the only option in a woman's life, which nowadays has the power of choice, considering the decision based on birth control to choose or not to have children⁽²⁾.

And, when the woman, teen or adult, opts for a pregnancy or it just happens, she will face the challenge to be a mother for the first time, no matter the age. At this stage, the woman goes through a process of construction, which will require preparation to enable them to take care of the newborn. This process may start during childhood, in which some women have as an example their own mothers and the interaction with them⁽⁴⁾.

The experience of teenage pregnancy entails in numerous disadvantages, compared to pregnancy in adulthood, physically, psychologically and socially, for the teenagers and their families, generating changes in all those involved in the process⁽⁵⁾. There is no doubt that the theme of motherhood in adolescence is enough exploited, however there is an information gap in the literature about the vision of the mother on the maternity process, to understand this experience.

The attribute of being a mother can become a life project, aiming to fill an identity or even an occupation gap. It is necessary to know

what are the meanings of motherhood, because sometimes the knowledge refers strictly to the biological pregnancy, and adolescence pregnancy can bring some negative effects, such as loss of educational opportunities, less working possibilities and reduced chances of a happy marriage, in addition to psychological conflicts by emotional state⁽⁶⁾, being a more complex process in adolescence than in adulthood.

It is urgent the need to assist and support the mothers who go through their first motherhood experience, so that they can recognize and appreciate themselves in their motherhood practice, since taking care of a child demands energy, affection and attention. The mother needs to be psychologically available, to convey affection and education and an emotional involvement for a more secure development of the kid. This attitude will result in greater realization and integration of their identities, in a narrow bond of connection and interaction with the baby⁽¹⁾.

important to highlight Ιt that motherhood is a theme of relevance to nursing as a unique profession in health promotion, even at the time of generating a new being, reflecting on the quality of life of both mother-to-be and child to be born. But what is the meaning of motherhood for primiparous adolescent and adult mothers? What is the importance of the support network in the first experience of motherhood? In this perspective, the objective of this study is to understand the meanings of motherhood for primiparous adolescent and adult mothers, unveiling their support network in such an experience.

METHODS

It is a descriptive, exploratory research with qualitative approach, carried out in the West of Santa Catarina, with the participation of eleven primiparous mothers, five teenagers, between 10 and 19 years old and six adults, between 20 and 40 years old.

All the participants of the study are users of the Unified Health System, of Chapecó-SC. We acted in one of this municipality districts because one of the researchers have contact with the work team there. From then on, the Community Health Agents (CHA) selected all primiparous mothers registered, whose children had up to two years old. Thus, the CHA and the researchers went to the house of the selected mothers for a

first visit, and invite them to participate in the study. If they accepted, another visit was scheduled to conduct the interview, at a time and date in which each participant was available.

The interviews were carried out in the second visit for approximately half an hour, at the primiparous mothers' home, who were with their babies only, without the presence of other adults, to provide greater peace of mind and freedom of expression.

It is worth noting that this research was only carried out after approval by the Research Ethics Committee of the Universidade Federal da Fronteira Sul-UFFS. And, to maintain the confidentiality of the participants, we call them by the name of the 11 rarest butterflies in the world with similar physical and emotional characteristics between the participants of the study and the butterflies, noting that to become a butterfly, a metamorphosis is required and this transformation process can be compared with motherhood because any mother is born ready. Thus, the five teenage mothers were called Azul, Madeira, Apolo, Folha and Branca Camuflada, and the 6 adult mothers Coruja, Camuflada, Pavão, Branca da Madeira, Transparente e Almirante Vermelho.

Data collection occurred through a script semi-structured questions with participant. All the speeches were recorded, considering an average time of 60 minutes per interview, which were later transcribed and analyzed, from content analysis (7). A set of techniques of communication analysis was used, to obtain the inference of knowledge related to the conditions of these messages production/reception, by systematic objectives procedures of the messages content description.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

After organizing and analyzing the data, we had two categories: "the first experience of motherhood for adult and adolescent mothers" and "the importance of the support in the first motherhood experience".

1. The first experience of motherhood for adult and adolescent mothers.

Motherhood is as a generator of responsibility and challenges and, at the same time, promotes personal social and emotional transformations, such as maturing, expanding behaviors so that mothers are recognized by their

capabilities and thus rescue or achieve their selfesteem with a benign meaning, making motherhood a unique, beautiful and sublime experience⁽¹⁾.

But, is maternal love an instinct, a female innate tendency or it depends, in large part, of a social behavior that varies according to time and uses? Maternal instinct is a myth, there is no universal and necessary maternal behavior, this feeling is extremely variable, according to the culture, the ambitions or the frustrations of the mother. The maternal love is only a human feeling like others and thus uncertain, fragile and imperfect. It can exist or not, appear and disappear, be strong or fragile, prefer a kid or all, opposite to a widespread belief in our days that it is deeply inscribed in the female nature⁽⁸⁾.

However, the experience of motherhood to the participants of this study, was highlighted as something wonderful, instinctive, emerging with maturity, new learning and together with the feeling of care, affection and attachment to the child:

"It's everything, I can't imagine how it was before he was born, how things made any sense, you know ... he is the treasure of our life, I love him." (Borboleta Coruja).

"Being a mother's is an instinct, it's wonderful, I was getting used to it, maturing and learning a lot ... I love my son more than anything in this life" (Borboleta Azul).

To become a mother, the woman goes through a process of construction, which requires preparation, enabling the mother to take care of the newborn⁽⁹⁻¹⁰⁾. This process may start in childhood, where some women take their own mothers as example and the interaction they have with them, as a mirror to create their own model, observed when playing with the dolls^(9.11).

In the case of teenage pregnancy, it is important to reiterate that it can happen by several factors, such as the absence of sex prevention, an oversight and sometimes is planned by one or both parents⁽¹²⁾. However, teenage motherhood is not always something planned and expected, it may be a shock, scary, because the teenager doesn't know what to do before all the changes pregnancy and motherhood can cause:

"At first, I was really scared, because from that day everything was going to change ... it is the best experience of my life ... I can't see me without my daughter, without my family." (Borboleta Azul). It is clear, as the speech above, that the pregnancy was not planned but during pregnancy, motherhood has become well accepted by all mothers that participated in this study. One of the interviewed mothers, Borboleta Azul, declares that she cannot see herself without her daughter, who has a primordial and irreplaceable place in her life. In this perspective, motherhood in the life of this teenager became something essential, and the difficulties need to be understood by their families and the health and education professionals as well as the society in general.

An important factor to note is that the teenagers who begin sexual life early and end up getting pregnant, usually come from families whose parents have gone through the same situation and experience, which makes it natural, as an example that leads to repeat the pregnancy experience at the same age⁽¹³⁾. In the case of adult mothers, the factors change according to the experiences and expectations of the gestation process.

From motherhood, constant changes accompany women lives that involve being the main provider of care for their child and the greatest responsibility of the baby well-being. After the birth, the woman's position in the life cycle changes, as the woman/daughter becomes a mom⁽¹⁴⁾.

On motherhood, one of the points mentioned by teenage and adult mothers was the difficulty of not being able to get out of the house, as before, and when they leave, they are concerned about the baby who stayed home:

".... you don't have time to think about you ... and we have time just for him (son), not for the husband and anyone..." (Borboleta Pavão).

".... Everything changed after the baby, everything, before him I went out without concern, now I go out and think: maybe he is hungry, he's crying, before I went out and came back the time I wanted to, but now ..." (Borboleta Madeira).

It is evidenced in the mothers' speech the concern about the baby and not only with themselves, since motherhood causes social changes that appear in the life not just of the teens but the mothers in general, such as difficulties to maintain the same relationship with friends, going to parties, routines and social events that were frequent^(6,15-16).

Adult and adolescent mothers also reported changes that occurred in their body, as they were thinner, and they also address the

discomfort during the gestational period, feeding difficulties, edema, pain during childbirth and the presence of stretch marks in their body:

"... before, I put on the clothes, a nice outfit and I was nice because I had a slimmer body, now I have stretch marks, it's impossible." (Borboleta Madeira).

"I suffered the whole pregnancy, vomiting, I lost weight, I wasn't hungry, I puke everything, after 6 months my body began to swell, I was very swollen, I couldn't walk, I kind of suffered all the pregnancy until she was born ..." (Borboleta Pavão).

The reports of Borboleta Madeira and Pavão, unveils the suffering during pregnancy, the disgust with respect to changes in the body, especially about gaining weight, which shows an apprehension about the aesthetics and self-image with a feeling of sadness, rejection and low self-esteem^(12.17).

After the process of pregnancy and all these changes, in addition to the childbirth which is also striking, it comes the changes and concerns with the baby and how it will be from now on, being a transition period, incorporating social and family responsibilities⁽¹⁵⁾. This issue was also found in this study:

".... Kind of, totally changes our life, but it changes for better, but you have to be prepared, because it's not like it was before, right? Your life turns around his life (son) ... he's my priority ... it's not like before." (Borboleta Camuflada).

"... you go in a store and there are shoes for you but when you see things for the baby, then you go ahead and buy everything for her (daughter). Lately it's all for my daughter, everything." (Borboleta Apolo).

When listening to them, it is evident how motherhood has changed the lives of these women as they achieve maturity and responsibility for another life. Another factor is that primiparous mothers can more easily relate to their children when they had already taken care of other children:

"... I took care of my little nephew, I had an idea on how it was dealing with a child you know, and I like to take care of children, in pregnancy, I babysit, so I was adapting myself, I already knew how it was, I knew that everything was going to change." (Borboleta Coruja).

However, holding a child or taking care of others' kids for a few hours, it is different from assuming full-time motherhood, being responsible for a kid⁽¹⁷⁾.

With respect to the main challenges of motherhood, we realized that most of the questions was about the care with their newborn baby. As the newborn is be very small and fragile, the mothers report a feeling of fear and anxiety in their first contact with the baby, after pregnancy during the adjusting process⁽¹⁵⁾.

In addition to the physiological changes and transformations in the routine of the mothers interviewed, some challenges also emerged for them, because they're not used to take care of a newborn or with the signs the babies transmit. In this respect, it is observed that, regardless of age, adult mothers also felt insecurity and fear with the newborn child, about cuddling, bathing and clean the umbilical stump:

"The difficulties when he was born, it was more because of my insecurity, I was insecure, afraid, how am I going to take care of the baby at the beginning, it was complicated, huh" (Borboleta Mórmon).

"I'm going to have a baby, how am I supposed to hold him, sometimes babies drown, turn purple, drown, I was afraid of giving the bottle to him, because there's more, but it was all easy, simple, something that is just to take care" (Borboleta Pavão).

On the lines above, it is clear the insecurity and fear that primiparous mothers feel when providing care for the baby, the fear of holding such a fragile being, so small and delicate. Thus, it is essential the nurses support in this process, because primiparous mothers are going through a period of adjustment in their lives and with the baby, full of doubts, questions and uncertainties and, in most cases, they are more accessible to receive support and guidance, clarifying doubts and helping.

2. The importance of support in the first experience of motherhood.

In the course of the research, we observed that motherhood is a period of great changes in a woman's life, and can be experienced in different ways, some with more difficulties, others less, but with the family support this moment can have less impact on the primiparous mothers' life.

The experience of motherhood in adulthood and adolescence may or may not have the support of the family, depending on the quality of the family ties and the economic-financial situation. However, the social support is one of the factors that contributes to the woman's psychological adaptation to their new

role. The family creates conditions to develop the new family with the arrival of the newborn, devoting attention and care, helping to strengthen bonds with the new member of the family⁽¹⁸⁾.

When it comes to teen pregnancy, the support of the family becomes essential, especially at the time of announcing the pregnancy:

"I never thought they (family) would have that reaction, that they would support me like that and I think it was one of the most important things that I had, because we understand how important it is to support your children, that the example comes from home ..." (Borboleta Folha).

Despite the importance of family support, some families do not receive the news of a teenage pregnancy well, perhaps because they planned a different future for their daughter due to economic, social, cultural or educational issues. When the family does not approve an early pregnancy, conflicts and disagreements between family members makes the maternal condition more complex⁽¹⁹⁾. And the new mother, when she knows about her pregnancy and starts living motherhood, feels the need of clarification and support in various areas, especially the emotional, to best experience the maternal identity construction⁽¹⁹⁻²⁰⁾.

Adult mothers in this study, received an intense family support, with no conflicts or fears when they announced their pregnancy:

"it was beautiful when I told my family that I was pregnant because everyone enjoyed it with me and supported me". (Borboleta Almirante Vermelho).

With motherhood, the primiparous mother, regardless of age, finds herself in the position of having to provide care to the newborn, but not always feeling able to perform such action. The female figure is relevant to help primiparous mothers, which is generally developed by the pregnant woman's mother, and the participation of grandmothers as a model of identity, in which she would play the same role as her mother, taking care of the newborn, developing skills and exchanging information⁽⁹⁾. The female figure, through the support of mothers and mothers-in-law, becomes very important, transmits security and tranquility:

"My mother is who gives me more support, she helps me in everything ... bathing, changing diapers, buying a diaper, talking ..." (Borboleta Transparente).

"The mother's support is everything, is the base, right, since I got pregnant she supported me, she ran to me no matter the time ..." (Borboleta Folha).

"My mother-in-law was the person who supported me most." (Borboleta Branca Camuflada).

Family support in the experience of motherhood is very important, especially from the mother or a feminine figure, to help the new mother to minimize the possible fears, insecurity and anxiety with the birth of the child, favoring the development of her competence and maturity^(6,8,21).

In this study, Borboleta Branca Camuflada did not receive her mother support, what caused stress and nervousness:

"She (mom) came over here (her home) when I was pregnant, she did a lot of scandal, left me quite stressed out, and I ended up having the baby before the time, with 37 weeks I was really nervous." (Borboleta Branca Camuflada).

The support of the family in the experience of motherhood is a prerequisite, so the primiparous mother feels supported, and the newborn can develop in a cozy and quiet environment, and encourages the best relationship between mother and child⁽²²⁾.

Motherhood is not necessarily marked only by the birth of the child, but the psychological changes and the family structure, especially the role that this woman assumes. It is important to remember that the relationship with the baby's father becomes critical, since the woman needs support and understanding to experience this moment of transformation in a more mild and pleasant way⁽¹⁴⁾.

Three adults and a teenager mothers reported that their husband or partner assists in caring for babies; They help changing diapers, bathing, during breastfeeding and sleeping time:

"Wow, until today he bathes, changes diaper, stays up in the night to hold her and brings me to feed her, then he puts her back to sleep." (Borboleta Azul).

"My husband helped me from the first moment I told him about the pregnancy." (Borboleta Almirante Vermelho).

During the entire period of gestation there must be some involvement of the partner, however, in our current society, the responsibility of getting pregnant usually affects only the woman, no matter how much we know she can't get pregnant alone. Therefore, the couple must

build a relationship based on complicity, respect and help, because from that time, they are no longer a couple but a family⁽²³⁾.

It is important to note that before the current society and also in the perception of the participants of this study, the man must also have a posture to develop parenthood, since pregnancy is not only a feminine event and the man has his role not only for financial support, but a father to develop a bond with the newborn with zeal, love, affection and care^(19,24).

Being a father is a role that is in wide transformation on the redesign of family life because of social changes, such as the insertion of women in the labor world, the absence of the father in some cases or, on the contrary, with more participation of the man in domestic life. And these changes are influencing the formation of different family structures, as well as the creation of different expectations and beliefs about the roles of the parents⁽²⁵⁾.

The family has a very important role in the social and educational development of the child. The parents, regardless of whether they are together or not, can work together to promote a harmonious and healthy growth of the child, leading it to adulthood, and it is important the participation of the father in this process, both for the child and for the motherhood and fatherhood experience.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In this research, the meaning of motherhood emerged as the dawn of maturation, new learning, the birth of the sense of care, affection and attachment to the child, which, for some, it becomes a dream come true, the meaning of their lives, the great treasure for mothers, who dream of the growth and development of their creations and want them to fly free and healthy.

We noticed that motherhood is full of challenges, responsibilities and achievements. It is necessary to offer the baby the right conditions for survival, education and prepare them for life. The main challenges of primiparous mothers are the newborn care, how to cuddle, give bath and clean the umbilical stump.

Some mothers, also highlighted that previous experience with younger brothers and other children, in a way, helped them in the experience of the first experience of motherhood. And on the implications of motherhood, some teenage mothers felt unprepared to play that role

because it's a new experience, they are young, and some cannot count on their support network.

The support network has a vital function during the process of being a mother, supporting both emotionally as financially. The mother figure is essential since primiparous mother, regardless of being a teenager or an adult, feels the experience of motherhood as something totally unknown, requiring help to deal with the baby and the new home, since it is at this point that a new family is born, full of responsibilities. Counting on family support, this moment can have less impact on the life of primiparous mothers. And the support provided by the father of the child is paramount, because, when he demonstrates interest in fatherhood, he transmits safety and comfort. And, when the mother goes through this process alone, she feels the lack of a male figure to share this moment with.

The limitations to this study occurred mainly by the scarce reference to motherhood in primiparous mothers, because literature deals more with teenage pregnancy, to the detriment of the interfaces of the first experience of motherhood, what difficults the search of updated references. In this perspective, we suggest other studies on the challenges of first pregnancy and motherhood that may even add the paternal participation in this experience.

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Note: This article is part of the original Final Monograph of the Nursing Course at Universidade Federal Fronteira Sul – UFFS campus, Chapecó/SC.

Received in: 11/05/2017 **Approved in:** 06/11/2017

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