

The exploration of women's experience and understanding of post-childbirth morbidities and help-seeking behaviour during the first twelve months after childbirth

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Introduction

Post-childbirth morbidities have burdened many women around the world negatively. The literature showed that not only most of them did not seek professional help but also normalising the problems were evident. **Better knowledge about women's experiences during this time helps policymakers to design services that increase the number of women to seek professional health and decrease adverse outcomes in their life.**

Aim

The main aim of this thesis was to explore women's experience and understanding of post-childbirth morbidities and help-seeking behaviour during the first twelve months after childbirth. We adopted three sub-questions: (i) to identify women's perceptions of the barriers and facilitators they experience in seeking help from health professionals; (ii) to investigate help-seeking behaviour among Australian women for their health problems; (iii) to explore online help-seeking discussions about health issues among women who participate in post-childbirth online support forums.

Methods

To answer the first sub-question, we applied a systematic qualitative meta-aggregation. The Behavioral Model of Health Service Use (BMHSU) utilised as a lens to view the qualitative

researches. The concept mapping as an integrative mixed-method applied for gaining consumer participant`s perspective, helped us to answer the second sub-question. An online platform recruited a group of Australian women (n=81) and purposive sampling to participate in different stages of concept mapping. The content of messages posted to the Australian online forum by women imported into NVivo 12 Pro as a qualitative data analysis software program. The data were evaluated by directed qualitative content and thematic analysis.

Results

Key themes that emerged by three studies were: women did not seek help because they accepted problems as a part of the motherhood role. Women shared their issues with family and friends as trusted people. Online platforms have become a favourite place to share their problems anonymously and normalising the problems after childbirth has been prominent.

Conclusion

The studies highlighted that there is a need to reconsider the approach to care after childbirth for family and healthcare providers.