

The history and background of postpartum nursing essay

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POSTPARTUMThe Postpartum or puerperium period begins after the delivery of the baby and ends when the mother's body has returned as closely as possible to its pre-pregnant state. This period usually lasts six to eight weeks. This period involves the mother progressing through many changes, both emotionally and physically, while learning how to deal with the changes and adjustments required with becoming a new mother. The postpartum period also involves the parents learning how to care for their newborn and learning how to function as a changed family unit. A mother needs to take good care of herself to rebuild her strength. She will need plenty of rest, good nutrition, and emotional and physical help during the first few weeks. Early childbearing may be life-threatening to both the mother and the child. Mothers younger than seventeen face an increased risk of maternal mortality because their bodies are not yet mature enough to bear children. They may not recognize the symptoms of pregnancy or may not wish to acknowledge a conception, thus delaying prenatal care as in Melissa case who is not aware of how far her pregnancy is and this can endanger the health of the child and mother. Adolescent mothers like Melissa are faced with the dual challenge of progressing through the stages of adolescence and, at the same time, adapting to the maternal role. Melissa who is still in the middle stage of adolescence still needs to be "mothered" by her own mother or a person in her life who acts as her mother (DeVito, 2007; Mercer, 1995, 2004), therefore, she will have specific needs for help to successfully navigate through the combined demands of adolescent development and her role as a new mother. Researchers identify the significance of role identity, social support relationships, and developmental perspectives for the adolescent

mother as she adapts to the demands of parenting (Clemmens, 2001, 2003; Gee & Rhodes, 2003; Rentschler, 2003). In addition, an adolescent's positive self-perception of parenting is influenced by having dependable social support relationships which Melissa has as evident in the narrative. Thus, the goals of care during the postpartum period are to: promote the physical well-being of both mother and baby; support the developing relationship between the baby and his or her mother, father, and family; support the development of infant feeding skills; support and strengthen the mother's knowledge, as well as her confidence in herself and in her baby's health and well-being, thus enabling her to fulfil her mothering role within her particular family and cultural situation; and support the development of parenting skills. The early days following childbirth are formative for the new mother, baby, and family. Certain fundamental needs and basic services are required for adjustment during the postpartum period, regardless of whether the birth venue has been the hospital, a birth centre, or home. These fundamental needs and basic services are: Rest and recovery from the physical demands of pregnancy and the birth experience; assessment of the physiological adaptation of the newborn; establishment of effective respiration and circulation; maintenance of an adequate body temperature; and facilitation of contact between the baby, mother, and family; assessment of the physiological adaptation of the mother and prevention of problems; vital signs; uterine tone; lochia; fundal height; condition of perineum; bladder function; breasts and nipples; bowel function; physical comfort; support of the mother, baby, and family during the period of adjustment (by family members, social contacts, and/or the community at large); education of the

mother (and family members) in aspects relative to personal and baby care; and completion of specific prophylactic or screening procedures organized through the different programs of maternal and newborn care, such as vitamin K administration and eye prophylaxis, immunization (Rh, rubella, hepatitis B), testing (PKU/thyroid), prevention of Rh immunization, and assessment of safety and security (e. g. car seats, potentially violent home situations, substance use). Melissa admits that she smokes a little. Nicotine, an addictive drug found in tobacco has the following effects on the female body. Menstrual cycle irregularities or absence of menstruation Menopause reached one or two years earlier Increased risk of cancer of the cervix Increased risk of stroke and heart attack

The effects of maternal smoking on the newborn

Passive smoking dramatically increases health risks for babies. Studies show that children exposed to second-hand smoke are at an increased risk of premature death and disease and are more likely to have thickening, irritation and inflammation of their airways. Second-hand smoke can impair a baby's breathing and heart rate, which can put them at a higher risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). If the mother smoke during pregnancy and after the baby is born, the baby's SIDS risk increases. If one parent smokes, the risk of SIDS doubles. If both parents smoke, the risk doubles again. If Melissa continues to expose her newborn to second-hand smoke, they're more likely to develop a range of lung and other health problems, including: Asthma Bronchiolitis Bronchitis Childhood cancers, including leukaemia Ear infection Impaired sense of smell Meningitis Meningococcal disease Pneumonia Tonsillitis There's also

evidence that exposure to second-hand smoke can increase the likelihood of behaviour problems and learning difficulties. Therefore, Melissa needs to be advised of the importance of not smoking, because of its negative effects on both she and her newborn. Melissa needs to be informed of the importance of skin-to-skin contact between she and her baby and should be encouraged to breastfeed during the first hour after birth as this stabilizes the baby and also stimulates the milk production system and promotes bonding. Because the relationship between academic failure and teen pregnancy is so strong, and teen pregnancy affects the educational achievement of teens themselves as well as that of their children, it is important that Melissa is encouraged to further her education. According to (Stephens, Wolf, & Batten, 2003, p. 5), " Adolescent parents and their children are both at critical points in their lives, when life courses can be shaped toward healthy development, stability, and productivity, or toward life-long poverty and dependency. Efforts to improve outcomes for these young families must take advantage of every opportunity to connect them with the services and support that will help them move toward positive growth". Melissa furthering her education will have a positive effect on her newborn later in his/her life.

Postpartum Depression

Pregnant teens may be at higher risk of postpartum depression (depression that starts after delivering a baby), according to the CDC. Girls who feel down and sad, either while pregnant or after the birth, should talk openly with their doctors or someone else they trust. Depression can interfere with taking good care of a newborn -- and with healthy teenage development --

but it can be treated. The nurses' intervention is crucial in this period; Melissa must be able to participate in making decisions about what she wants to learn. If nurses recognize something that a particular person may need to know, but as yet remains unidentified, they should help make it easier for that individual to learn it.

Building self-esteem

A mother's progress through the postpartum phase is closely related to her own self-esteem. If she is feeling good about herself and her ability to handle the situation, she will likely move along well and become more independent. Nurses can encourage self-esteem in all family members by confirming that their responses to the entire birthing process are legitimate and that other people have experienced similar reactions.

Ensuring that what the parents learn applies to their home situation

To integrate new information into the context of their own situations, parents need to apply it, practically, in day-to-day life.

Encouraging self-responsibility

As a mother works through the phases of postpartum, she gradually becomes more responsible for her new status, her new baby, and the new family situation. One way to ease her move through these phases is to help her to feel comfortable with her present phase. Once she believes that she is "okay" and that her emotional and physical responses are within a normal range, she will find it much easier to think about taking on new tasks and

responsibilities. Therefore, the support from Melissa mother is very crucial for both mother and her newborn.