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Women and providers' fears driving decision-making on mode of birth: experience from Thailand in the QUALI-DEC project

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Category:Research

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Secondary Track, If Applicable:Health Systems and Workforce

Indicate Whether Your Abstract Has Special Focus On Any Of The Following:Youth

Abstract Text:Caesarean sections rates are increasing globally. Multiple factors contribute to the increase but non-clinical factors have grown in importance in the last two decades. Fear impregnates preferences and decision-making for mode of birth among all involved, women, families and healthcare providers. We aimed to explore the fear dynamics and factors driving this fear in Thailand. , This is a formative qualitative study in eight hospitals in Thailand participating in the QUALI-DEC project ('Appropriate use of caesarean section through QUALity DECision-making by women and providers'). We used a health facility readiness assessment and in-depth interviews (IDIs) with women (pregnant and postpartum), potential companions, and healthcare providers. We used a thematic analysis approach to summarize the findings on fear., A total of 128 IDIs were included in the analysis. The result revealed three themes of fear related to vaginal birth: 1) labor pain and the process of childbirth itself; 2) uncertainties regarding time of onset of labour and consequences of childbirth; 3) risks of complications during the process of labour for either the mother or the baby. The key causes of these fears in women were suboptimal information about childbirth, and insufficient pain management and emotional support. In addition, for providers, especially young staff with less experience and practice, lack of appropriate supervision, and lack of technical skills for assisted vaginal birth can cause uncertainty and fear. As a consequence, fears of both women and providers could drive the decision-making on mode of birth where caesarean section was viewed as a method of choice to avoid pain, uncertainty, and perceived avoidable risks of childbirth., In Thailand, fear of childbirth and, in particular, of vaginal delivery, is a significant factor underlying pregnant women's preference and decision-making for caesarean section. Effective communication and information on mode of birth, and effective pain management during labour and childbirth may reduce misconceptions about birth and reduce unnecessary caesarean section. Simultaneously, young providers require supervision, and training to increase technical skills to manage childbirth vaginally, and skills for safe assisted vaginal birth.

Ethical Declaration:Yes

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