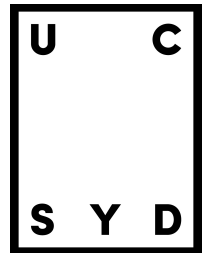


Soulful childbirth - upgrading communication on existential matters in Danish Maternity Care Services



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Beginning of life

- Birth
 - potentially transformning life
 - impacting existential meaning
- In research found to be:
 - Unique
 - Mysterious
 - Powerful
 - Transforming
 - Unifying
 - Meaningful
 - Transcendent
- Rebirth of woman into a mother

Interest in spiritual care training?

WHO

- Observation in 18 countries of how spirituality, religion and personal beliefs (SRPB) relate to quality of life: *"It is suggested that SRPB should be more routinely addressed in assessment of QoL, as it can make a substantial difference"*
 - » WHOQOL SRPB Group 2006
- Spiritual Care → Palliative Care: *"Integrates the psychological and spiritual aspects of patient care;"*
 - » WHO definition of palliative care 2011
- Feb 2018: New WHO guideline on intrapartum care
 - Growing medicalization of the process: *"...not only the clinical requirements for a safe labour and childbirth but also meet the psychological and emotional needs of women."*
 - » WHO 2018

Maternity Care

- Existential aspects of the childbirth period remain in the periphery of prevailing care
- Hospital is the most religious place in the city?
- New initiatives emerging from the Danish national church and private market related to motherhood and childbirth



Motherhood transition through an existential lens

Nationwide survey among first-time
mothers (FT or PT) 2011(n=913)

Existential
meaning among
first- time
mothers (2014)

Prayer and
Meditation
among first-time
mothers (2016)

First Child's
Impact on
Parental
Relationship: an
Existential
Perspective
(2018)

The moment of
birth through an
existential lens in
secular society
(2018 – in
submission)

Motherhood transition through an existential lens

Midwifery • (2018) 188–198



Making existential meaning in transition to motherhood—A scoping review

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:
Received 23 September 2012
Received in revised form
3 May 2013
Accepted 30 June 2013

Keywords:
Meaning-making
Motherhood
Childbirth
Transition

ABSTRACT

Objective: to provide a thematic overview of the existing literature on existential meaning-making related to transition to motherhood among mothers of full term born babies in Western oriented countries and to discuss the themes from an existential psychology perspective.
Design: the review follows the approach of a scoping review. Systematic searches in the electronic databases PubMed, CINAHL and PsycINFO were combined with manual and electronic searches for related references. Studies published between 1950 and 2010 examining dimensions of existential meaning-making in transition to motherhood were selected. Eleven papers were included in the synthesis, all using qualitative interviews. The following data were extracted from each study: (a) author(s), year of publication, study location, (b) aims of the study, (c) participants, (d) research design, (e) data collection method, (f) outcome measures, and (g) results.
Measurements: the studies were synthesised in a thematisation on the basis of the existential psychotherapist and philosopher Emmy van Deurzen's concepts of four interwoven life dimensions, through which we experience, interpret, and act in the world: Umwelt, Mitwelt, Eigenwelt, and Überwelt.
Key conclusions: the findings in this review suggest that transition to motherhood is considered a pivotal and paradoxical life event. Through the lens of existential psychology it can be interpreted as an

Prinds et al. *BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth* (2016) 16:8
DOI 10.1186/s12884-016-0802-6

BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Open Access

Prayer and meditation among Danish first time mothers—a questionnaire study

Christina Prinds^{1,2*}, Dorte Hvidtjørn¹, Axel Skytthe³, Ole Mogensen⁴ and Niels Christian Hvidt³

Abstract

Background: Mothers' existential dimensions in the transition to motherhood have not been described thoroughly. They might experience disruption and new perspectives in existential ways and this may especially be the case in preterm birth. The aim of this study was twofold. First we investigated the existential dimension of motherhood transition in a secularized context, through practices of prayer and meditation. Second we described the relationship between time of birth (term/preterm) and the prayer/meditation practices of the mothers.

Methods: Data were gathered from a nationwide questionnaire survey among first time mothers conducted during the summer 2011. All Danish women who gave birth before the 32nd pregnancy week ($n = 255$), and double the number of mothers who gave birth at full term ($n = 658$) in 2010 were included (total $n = 913$). The questionnaire consisted of 46 overall items categorized in seven sections, which independently cover important aspects of existential meaning-making related to becoming a mother. The respondent rate was 57 % ($n = 517$).

Results: Moments of praying or meditation 6–18 months post partum were reported by 65 %, and mothers who responded affirmatively, practiced prayer ($n = 286$) more than meditation ($n = 89$), $p < 0.001$. We did not observe differences in affirmative responses to prayer or meditation between mothers of full term or preterm born children, not even after controlling for perinatal or post partum loss, mode of birth, age, status of cohabiting or education.

Conclusions: In this explorative study we found specific practices of existential meaning-making through prayer and/or meditation among first time mothers, living in a very secularized context. Yet we know only little about character or importance of these practices among mothers, and hardly anything about existential meaning-making among new fathers. Hence the investigation of existential meaning-making related to other dimensions of health and

Prinds et al. *BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth* (2018) 18:157
https://doi.org/10.1186/s12884-018-1802-5

BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Open Access

First child's impact on parental relationship: an existential perspective

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Abstract

Background: The first child's birth is for most mothers a profound experience carrying the potential to change life orientations and values. However, little is known of how becoming a mother influences the existential dimensions of life within the parental relationship for example how motherhood may change how we view our partner and what we find important. The aim of this study was to explore how becoming a mother might change the parental relationship seen from the mother's perspective with a specific focus on dimensions related to existential meaning-making.

Methods: In 2011, 499 Danish first time mothers answered a questionnaire, from which five core items related to changes in the partner relationship from the perspective of the mother, informed this study. The cohort consisted of mothers who gave birth before the 32nd week of gestation ($n = 127$) and mothers who gave birth at full term ($n = 372$). Item 1 focused on thoughts and conversations with her partner about the life change. Item 2 referred to the potential feeling of stronger ties to the partner. Item 3 related to the feeling of being connected to 'something bigger than one self' together with the partner. Item 4 focused on potential conflicts due to having a child, and item 5 referred to the experience of dreams. Possible answers ranged from 'To a high degree' to 'Not at all'.

Results: Most respondents found birth of the first child to have forged stronger ties to their partner and have led to both thoughts and conversations about how life together as a couple changed. At the same time, some experienced more conflicts with their partner than before giving birth, however, the majority did

J Perinat Neonat Nurs • Volume 28 Number 4, 271–279 • Copyright © 2014 Wolters Kluwer Health | Lippincott Williams & Wilkins



Existential Meaning Among First-Time Full-Term and Preterm Mothers

A Questionnaire Study

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ABSTRACT

Research indicates that childbirth is a time when a woman might experience existential disruptions and gain new perspectives on life. The 2-fold aim of this study was to investigate whether attitudes related to existential meaning among first-time mothers intensify and whether they differ between mothers who gave birth at full term and those who gave birth preterm. All first-time mothers who gave birth in Denmark in 2010 before the 32nd week of pregnancy and twice that number of full-term mothers (randomly sampled) were invited to participate in a national cross-sectional survey. Five core items concerning

were intensified and almost similar, regardless of whether they gave birth full-term or preterm.

Key Words: childbirth premature, life purpose, motherhood, structured questionnaire

Becoming a mother is a transitional life event,^{1–3} during which existential reflections regarding the meaning of life may be reviewed.^{4,5} Finding meaning in life has been shown to be important to health and well-being.^{6–8} The 2-fold aim of this article was to investigate the intensification of attitudes

Aim

- ...to develop, evaluate and implement continuing education focusing on existential communication as part of an important professional development for midwives, obstetricians and nurses

Characteristics

- Beginning of life – expectations different from end of life
- Maternity Service – hospital
- Time constraints – contacts lasting on average 15 minutes
- No life-continuing contact (as GPs)
- 1/3 of midwives leaves maternity ward (Bondo 2016)



Photo: University of Nottingham Health Service

Effect of good communication

- Psychosocially (examples)
 - Reduction of negative feelings
 - Improved illness-”self-efficacy” among cancerpatients
- Somatic (examples)
 - Improved BP among hypertensive patients
 - Improved BS regulation among diabetics
 - Reduction of post-operative pain
 - Reduced use of pain-relieving medication
 - Downgrading of stresshormones

Orth et al. 1987; Greenfield et al. 1988; Kaplan et al 1989 Roter et al 1995, Ong et al. 1995; Stewart et al 1995, 2000 & 2003 Ford et al. 1996; Zachariae et al. 2003, Nobile et al 2003 Finset and Mjaaland 2008, Neumann et al 2010

Study context A

- Large regional hospital: Hospital Lillebaelt
 - 2010: Launch of big scale mandatory communication skills training course based on the Calgary Cambridge Guide and initial efficacy studies from the hospital
- Consists of 5 elements:
 1. Education of trainers
 2. Courses for HP in clinical departments (3 days course)
 3. Education of new staff
 4. Courses for staff in service departments (2 days course)
 5. Maintenance of communication skills

Ammentorp J, Kofoed P-E. Pat Educ Couns. 2011
Ammentorp J, et al. Pat Educ Couns. 2014

Study context B

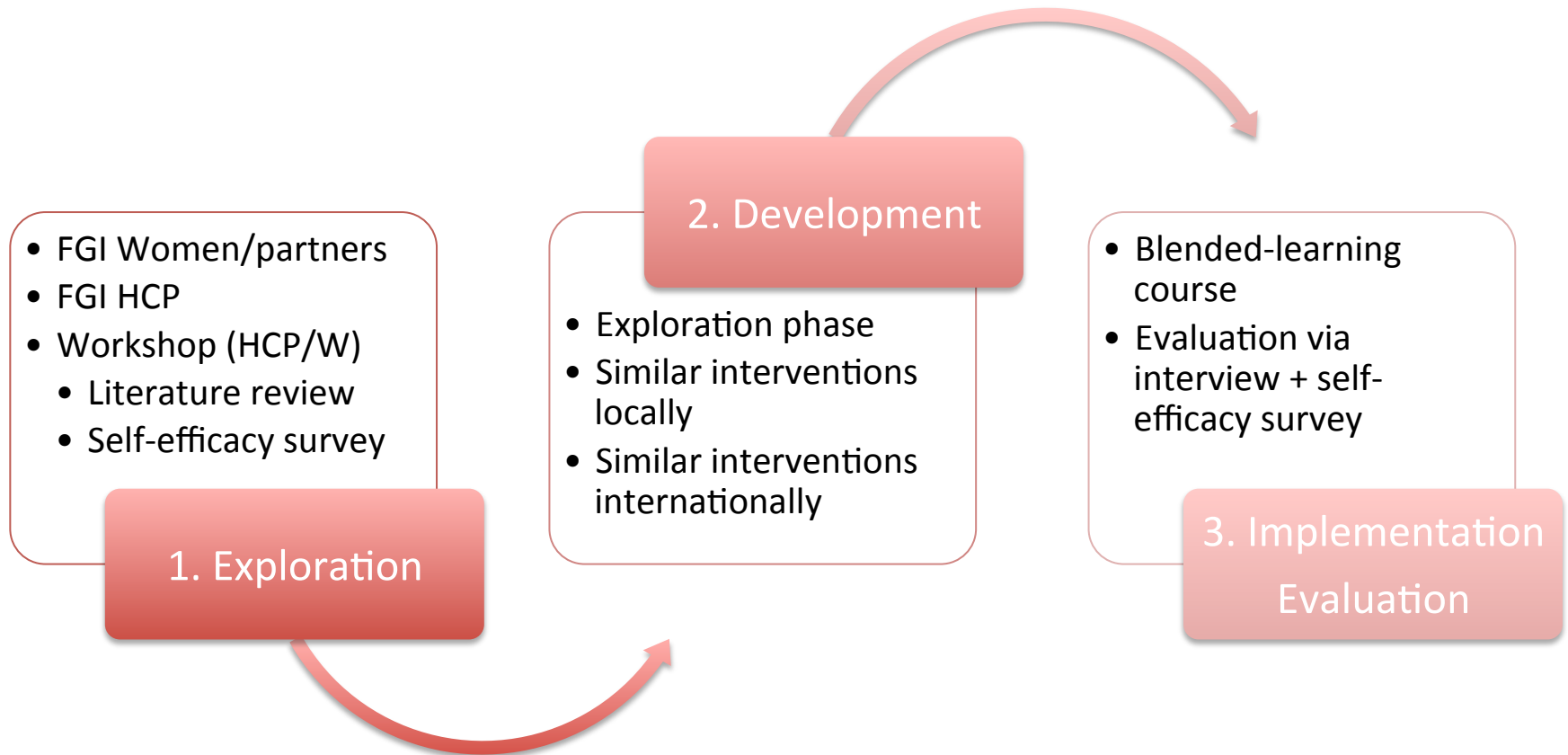
- Findings from mandatory communication skills training-course in a hospital context
 - Improved patients experiences of communication and of care and treatment
 - Improved self-efficacy among HP

» Ammentorp J et al 2007 & 2009; Ammentorp J & Kofoed P-E. 2010
Ammentorp J, Laulund L, Kofoed P-E. 2011; Nørgaard B et al 2012,
Ammentorp J et al. 2009; Ammentorp J & Kofoed P-E. 2010, Nørgaard B et al
2012, 2013, Ammentorp J et al 2013

Study site & Participants

- Kolding Hospital – a part of Hospital Lillebaelt
– 3300 births
- 42.000 ambulant visits related to pregnancy and childbirth
- Observations from mandatory communication skills training-course at the department...

Study design



Existential matters

*Empty-handed I entered
The world
Barefoot I leave it*

*My coming, my going –
Two simple happenings
That got entangled*

Kozan Idikyō 1360 ("Jisci")

Thank you for your attention

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