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*Mother satisfaction with care  
provided by midwives in maternity-neonatal ward. I*

The measurement of patient satisfaction is considered an important element in the evaluation of the quality of medical care. It enables the identification of factors affecting satisfaction, shows organizational deficiencies of health care units, and thus results in the improvement of their functioning (1, 2, 3, 6, 7).

In the situation where quality becomes a priority for an organization, all the staff who have contact with a patient/client should be responsible for his/her satisfaction (6). However, the results of studies conducted in Poland and abroad indicate that in the area of the quality of care a significant role is ascribed to nurses/midwives (2 quot. after 6).

Therefore, the following research problem was posed: What is the level of mother satisfaction with care provided by midwives in a maternity-neonatal ward? The adopted hypothesis assumed that the level of satisfaction of women in childbirth with care provided by midwives in maternity-neonatal ward is high.

#### MATERIAL AND METHODS

In order to evaluate the level of mother satisfaction with care provided by midwives in maternity-neonatal ward, a standardized questionnaire was applied of the EUROPEP group, which is the agency of the Equip (European Working Group for the Matters of Quality in Family Medicine) (1, 3, 5, 8, 9). Selected care criteria were adjusted by the authors of the presented study to specify the tasks of a midwife in a maternity-neonatal ward.

The study was conducted in 2004 in maternity-neonatal wards at five hospitals in the Lublin Region of various referral levels, and covered the total number of 179 mothers on the day of discharge from hospital. The participation was voluntary and anonymous, and the respondents were selected at random. Women in the study were aged 17–45, mean age 28; 50.8% of respondents were urban inhabitants and the remaining 49.2% rural inhabitants. Over a half of the women (52.5%) were in childbirth for the first time, whereas for the remaining respondents (47.5%) the labour was a subsequent one.

#### RESULTS

The majority of women in childbirth (70.4%) were satisfied with care provided by the midwives in maternity-neonatal wards, while 29.6% of mothers were dissatisfied.

The following elements of care realized by a midwife obtained high evaluations: • midwife's technical skills – 93.3% • encouraging and enabling breast feeding in accordance with mother's needs – 89.4% • cooperation of a midwife with doctor and other medical staff – 87.2% • encouraging and enabling breast feeding in accordance with child's needs – 84.4% • assistance in acquiring

capabilities for independent care of a child – 82.1% • conscientiousness in realizing care of a woman in labour – 81.6% • conscientiousness in realizing care of a child – 81.6% • arrangement of personal contact with child's father and/or other close people – 81.0% • devoting to the patient a sufficient amount of time – 77.1% • quick reaction in order to soothe complaints – 76.1% • midwife's being at disposal when a patient needed her help – 76.0% • arranging contact by phone with child's father and/or other close people – 71.5% • interest in patient's problems – 70.4% • preparation of a patient for self-care – 66.5% • engagement of a midwife in preparation of a patient for examination, consultation, procedure – 66.5% • approaching the details of treatment in a discreet way – 65.4% • providing comprehensive answers to questions by a patient or her family – 65.4% • providing univocal information with respect to nursing activities realized – 61.5% • preparation of a patient for the care of child at home – 59.8% • assistance in understanding the guidelines provided by a midwife – 59.2% • possessing time for conversation with patient – 57.5% • assisting women in childbirth in coping with emotional problems of the puerperium period – 53.1%.

The following elements of care realized by a midwife obtained low evaluations in the opinions of women in labour: • provision of information about the possibility to contact the staff in the ward after discharge from hospital – 61.5% • encouraging woman in childbirth to talk about her problems – 58.1% • encouraging child's father and/or other close people to assist in taking care of the newborn – 57.0% • engagement of a patient and her family to participate in the process of nursing – 54.7% • encouraging child's father and/or other close people to take care of the mother – 53.6%.

## DISCUSSION

The expectations of clients/patients and their perception of the quality of care are rarely associated with only one element of the care provided. Most frequently, they take into consideration many factors, such as: reliability, responsibility, competence, availability, communication, understanding patient's needs, and trust (1, 3, 6). It should also be mentioned that medical staff should know and accept criteria important for patients, and not the ones which are considered as such in their opinions (3, 6). The results of the presented studies unequivocally indicate the criteria of care preferred by mothers. In addition, the measures were reported which obtained low evaluations by patients with respect to medical care. It should be underlined that the criteria reported are in accordance with the Act in the Matter of the Occupation of Nurse and Midwife, as well as with modern trends in management in obstetric care (4, 10). These criteria should be realized at the highest level. The criteria which were evaluated by the respondents in more negative terms indicated the areas of care, where the needs of patients were not satisfied – patients who are most often conscious of what standard of care they may demand.

Preliminary studies show that the level of mother satisfaction may be positively correlated with proper communication between midwife-patient and her family, as well as with the engagement of patients in the nursing process. This requires further, more comprehensive studies.

In summing up, it may be presumed that while aiming at the provision of the highest quality services it is important to recognize factors which may affect the evaluations expressed by patients, as well as to solve organizational problems of an individual institution.

## CONCLUSIONS

1. The majority of mothers (70.4%) were satisfied with care provided by midwives in a maternity ward. The remaining women (29.6%) were dissatisfied.
2. Technical skills of a midwife obtained the highest evaluation (93.3%), whereas obtaining information about the possibility to contact the staff by phone after discharge from hospital was evaluated in most negative terms (61.5%).

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## SUMMARY

Patient satisfaction is an important element of evaluation of the quality of health care. Patients' opinions concerning the care provided may be positive or critical; however, they should always be perceived by the managers as a signal for changes, which may make the functioning of a health care unit more efficient. Aiming at the provision of satisfactory medical services should be an obligation of each staff member. However, a considerable role in this respect is ascribed to nurses/midwives. This occupational group is the 'closest' to the patient, because it provides 24-hour care. The research problem was posed: What is the level of mother satisfaction with care provided by midwives in maternity-neonatal ward? A standardized questionnaire of the EUROPEP group was applied in order to evaluate the level of women in childbirth satisfaction with care. Studies were conducted in maternity-neonatal wards at five hospitals in the Lublin Region of various referral levels. The study covered a total of 179 mothers on the day of discharge from hospital. Participation in the study was voluntary and anonymous, and respondents were selected at random. The majority (70.4%) of mothers were satisfied with care provided by midwives. The remaining women (29.6%) were dissatisfied. Technical skills of a midwife were evaluated in the most positive terms (93.3%). The lowest evaluations concerned the obtaining of information about the possibility to contact hospital staff by phone after discharge from hospital (61.5%).

Satysfakcja położnic z opieki świadczonej przez położne oddziału położniczo-noworodkowego. I

Satysfakcja pacjenta jest ważnym elementem oceny jakości opieki zdrowotnej. Opinie pacjentów co do świadczonej opieki mogą być pozytywne bądź krytyczne. Zawsze jednak powinny być postrzegane przez zarządzających jako sygnał do zmian, które mogą usprawnić funkcjonowanie

zakładu opieki zdrowotnej. Dążenie do świadczenia satysfakcjonujących usług medycznych powinno być obowiązkiem każdego pracownika. Jednak znaczącą rolę przypisuje się tu zespołom pielęgniarek /położnych. Ta grupa zawodowa jest „najbliżej” pacjenta, gdyż świadczy opiekę przez całą dobę. Postawiono pytanie problemowe: Jaki jest poziom satysfakcji położnic z opieki świadczonej przez położne oddziału położniczo-noworodkowego? Do oceny poziomu satysfakcji położnic z opieki zastosowano standaryzowany kwestionariusz grupy EUROPEP. Badania przeprowadzono na oddziałach położniczo-noworodkowych w pięciu szpitalach województwa lubelskiego o różnym poziomie referencyjnym. Ogółem badaniami objęto 179 położnic w dobie wypisu do domu. Udział w badaniach był dobrowolny i anonimowy, a dobór osób losowy. Większość (70,4%) położnic była usatysfakcjonowana z opieki świadczonej przez położne. Pozostałe (29,6%) kobiety były niezadowolone. Najlepiej oceniono sprawność techniczną położnej (93,3%). Najniższe oceny dotyczyły uzyskiwania informacji o możliwości telefonicznego kontaktu z pracownikami po opuszczeniu szpitala (61,5%).