Diversity and Challenges in the Management of Maternity Care for Migrant Women

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Maternal and Child Health in Europe  
(Reeske and Razum 2011)

• Throughout Europe perinatal and infant mortality vary by social and ethnic group
• Due to the heterogeneity in the definition of migrant status few studies from different European countries are comparable methodologically
• Migrants who lack residence status or whose position is uncertain are at a particularly high risk of unfavourable perinatal health outcomes
Factors influencing perinatal outcomes among migrants

• Studies on associations between migration background and *low birth weight* or *preterm birth* are inconsistent
• The risk of preterm birth among migrant women varies according to country of origin and birth
• Migrant women tend to begin *antenatal visits* later in pregnancy and make fewer visits compared to non-migrant women
• Quality of care
  – failure to adress the needs of people with migrant background adequately, such as through the provision of interpretation services or cultural mediation, results in considerable barriers to service delivery
Our study - data collection and analysis

• Multi-stage focus group interviews with five midwives and one public health nurse
  – The focus group met on three occasions
• Open questions:
  – What are your perceptions of managing the maternity care of migrant women?
  – How do you work to promote health and wellbeing of these women?
• Content analysis
Results

• The overarching theme:
  *Managing and supporting educational, relational and cultural diversity in maternity care*

• Characterized by two subthemes:
  *Health challenges*
  *Cultural challenges*
Health Challenges

- Differing expectations of support
- Diversity in education and knowledge
- Emotional pain
- Physical consequences for the foetus, delivery and the newborn baby
Cultural Challenges

• Linguistic barriers and inconsistency in the use and quality of the interpretation services
• Relational diversity
• Lack of assets for social integration and promoting the women’s health and well-being
Discussion

• The results revealed the importance of building systematic knowledge in the area of maternity care for migrant women.

• Individual treatment is important when managing and supporting migrant women because they constitute a diverse group, often with unfamiliar needs.

• Cultural differences, diversity and expectations of support lead to variations in perceptions of the value of, satisfaction with and requirements on maternity care.

• Individual, sensitive care is not enough and maternity care services must be adapted to migrant women.
Migrant women’s perceptions of their needs and experiences related to pregnancy and childbirth (Balaam et al. 2012)

- Preserving one’s identity in the new country:
  - Struggling to find meaning
  - Caring relationships
Implications for Midwifery and Nursing Management

• Organizing maternity care
  – implementing supervision built on a relationship and aimed at achieving trust

• Health care managers
  – important actions: relational continuity, flexibility, adaptation to each woman’s needs and coordination of the health-care system

• The health of minority groups must constitute a part of all health education
A Future Area of Research

• A future area of research is an investigation of migrant women’s views on the maternity care

• This study will start in autumn 2012:
  – «Adjusted maternity care for migrant women»
    • interviews with new mothers - how they experienced the maternity care
  – a study by Anne Lyberg and Berit Viken
References

