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Cięcie cesarskie w opinii ciążarnych

Caesarean section in the opinion of pregnant women

Streszczenie

Cel pracy. Celem pracy była analiza czynników motywujących przyszłe matki do wyboru zakończenia ciąży drogą cięcia cesarskiego oraz określenie ich odsetka w populacji miasta Białegostoku.

Materiał i metoda. Badaniem ankietowym objęto 132 kobiety ciężarne, pacjentki białostockich szpitali, poradni oraz uczestniczki kursów szkoły rodzenia.

Wyniki. Wyniki badań wskazują na wysokie zainteresowanie cięciem cesarskim. Ponad 21% badanych wybrałoby tę formę zakończenia ciąży. Wysoki odsetek kobiet (70%) uważa, że poród drogą cięcia cesarskiego stał się „modny”. Respondentki czerpią informacje na temat ciąży i porodu głównie z czasopism. Na korzystanie z tej formy przekazu wskazało 78% ankietowanych. Największy odsetek entuzjastek cięcia cesarskiego (23%) znajduje się w grupie kobiet, dla których źródłem wiedzy jest lekarz. Najważniejszym czynnikiem skłaniającym ciężarne do rozważania rozwiązania ciąży cięciem cesarskim jest strach przed bólem (56%).

Wnioski. Niski poziom wiedzy medycznej leży u podstaw zainteresowania cięciem cesarskim oraz pogłębia błędne przekonanie, że poród zabiegowy jest bezpieczniejszy i nie-
nie mniejsze ryzyko powikłań niż poród fizjologiczny.

Słowa kluczowe: cięcie cesarskie, rozrodczość, poród.

Summary

Objective. The aim of this study was to analyze factors motivating future mothers to terminate their pregnancy by means of caesarean section and to specify the percentage of such mothers in Białystok city.

Material and method. The survey was conducted among 132 pregnant women, patients of Białystok hospitals, clinics and participants of school of birth.

Results. The results of the survey indicate a high interest in the caesarean section. Over 21% respondents would opt for this method of termination of pregnancy. A high proportion of respondents (70%) regard caesarean section as “trendy”. Respondents’ knowledge about pregnancy and labour stems mainly from magazines. This form of information source was stated by 78% of respondents. The highest percentage of caesarean section enthusiasts (23%) is among women for whom the doctor is the source of knowledge. The most important factor inclining women to make a decision about undergoing caesarean section is the fear of pain (56%).

Conclusions. The low level of medical knowledge underlies the interest in caesarean section as a means of delivery and increases the belief that surgical intervention is safer and less prone to complications than natural childbirth.

Key words: caesarean section, reproduction, labor.

INTRODUCTION

The complexity of the problem of pregnant women's attitude towards caesarean section (C-section) together with a rising proportion of surgical childbirths motivates scientists to conduct research in order to find factors influencing women's choice of surgical childbirth.

Doctors and other specialists taking part in the discussion on the factors affecting the increase of interest in C-section and the acceptability of C-section on request claim that patients not always have sufficient knowledge on possible complications this obstetric surgery may have [1].

The quest for the universal solutions to the problem is aimed at prevention of the alarming rise in the number of C-sections, including those on patient's request.

MAIN OBJECTIVES

1. Defining the factors influencing the increased interest in C-section among pregnant women and the evaluation of the number of the proponents of this procedure.
2. Evaluating respondent's level of knowledge concerning benefits and dangers connected with C-section.
3. Presenting the sources of knowledge and the impact they have on women's attitude towards pregnancy and childbirth.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

The research was based on a diagnostic survey. A 23-question auditorium questionnaire was the research tool. The study was anonymous and voluntary. It was focused on pregnant women regardless of the pregnancy stage or a number of previous deliveries. The survey was conducted in Białystok in public hospitals, outpatients departments and private Obstetrics and Gynecology clinics and among participants of schools of birth. Its aim was to gain information for assessing the dynamics of the contemporary social phenomena as far as pregnant women's views on C-section are concerned.

OUTCOMES

There were 132 survey forms returned back. The pregnant respondents were aged 17 to 42 years. Higher education was reported by 81 of the women (81%), secondary education – by 41 (32%), and vocational education – by 4 (3%) and 2 of them (1.5%) had primary education.

The respondents gained their knowledge on pregnancy and childbirth mainly from magazines. This source of information was mentioned by 104 out of 132 women. Apart from that, the patients mentioned the Internet (86), doctor's knowledge (84), other women's experience (75), medical publications (62), midwife's knowledge (39) and information received from schools of birth, from TV and knowledge acquired during studies (13). A large proportion of women (78%) declared readiness for a natural childbirth. C-section was indicated by 28 of the respondents (21%). After considering the general tendencies and health behaviour the patients were asked whether they perceive a fashion for C-section and 92 of the respondents (70%) gave a positive answer.

The relationship between respondents' education and their willingness to undergo C-section was examined. It turned out that over 20% of women with higher education (17 out of 64) opted for C-section while in the group with secondary education the procedure would be chosen by 22% of pregnant women (9 out of 32).

The analysis of the way sources of information influence women's choice of C-section proved that those women who gained their knowledge on pregnancy and labour from the doctors (23%) were most enthusiastic about surgical childbirth. Respondents who obtained information from other women's experience were most skeptic about caesarian childbirth on request.

The survey also included questions about factors influencing women's decision to deliver surgically. It appears that it is the fear of pain that makes patients choose C-section. This factor was considered as the most important one by 75 out of 132 respondents. Moreover, this answer was the only one that was chosen by most women. Another popular answer was the anxiety about baby's safety. However, it was chosen by only 30 respondents.

As far as the risk of complications is concerned, 43 of pregnant women (32%) point out that a natural childbirth carries greater risk than C-section. Surgical delivery was considered more dangerous for 39 of respondents (29%). Women who opted for 'I don't know' answer were in the majority (37%).

The analysis of mother and baby's health safety showed that 40 of respondents (over 30%) consider C-section safer in comparison to a natural childbirth. An opposite opinion was held by 39 of them (30%) while 51 of women (39%) had no opinion.

The questionnaire also included questions concerning women's knowledge on possible complications that may occur during C-section. Analysis of the answers proved that 90 out of 132 respondents (68%) had no idea about complications women may develop after the surgery. As far as complications of babies are concerned, 117 out of 132 (88%) respondents showed complete lack of knowledge.

The potential benefits of C-section both for mothers and babies were also examined. Women perceived lack of birth pangs as the main advantage. This answer was considered as the first and most important one by 64 of respondents. The short course of abdominal delivery was second most popular answer, chosen by 50 women.

As far as the benefits surgical births for babies are concerned, the respondents (55 of them) pointed to smaller effort they have to make, treating it as the major advantage.

DISCUSSION

According to Kosińska et al., the greatest proportion of Warsaw and Puck respondents gained their knowledge on pregnancy and childbirth from gynaecologists and literature [2]. Magazines, which constitute the most popular source of information among women from Białystok, turn out to be a marginal source in Kosińska's survey.

Childbirth preferences were also the subject of research of Skrzypulec et al. (Medical University of Silesia, Clinic of Obstetrics and Gynaecology). They estimated that women opting for C-section account for 20% [3]. This result is comparable to our investigations (21%).

It is worth mentioning that according to various publications cesareans on request account for 5% (Great Britain) to 20% (the USA). Brazil is an exception since elective C-sections constitute 90% of private clinics childbirths [4].

The results of our research seem to correspond to the findings of Skrzypulec et.al. It turns out that pregnant women's education has no influence on their knowledge level and health behaviour and the main reason for the choice of surgical delivery is the fear of pain and anxiety about baby's safety. Feinmann and Singer point to the same motivations [5, 6].

The unjustified opinion that C-section is safer and carries potentially lower risk of complications for both mothers and babies is XXI century's major misconception [7]. This opinion is shared by such organizations as the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada (SOGC), the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE), the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG), the International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics (FIGO), World Health Organization (WHO) and National Institutes of Health (NIH) [8].

CONCLUSION

1. The low level of pregnant women's knowledge on pregnancy, childbirth and health behavior are the main factors influencing patients' interest in surgical delivery.
2. The level of education has no impact on medical knowledge and health behavior.
3. The sources of information on pregnancy and childbirth are unfavourable factors influencing the rise in C-section procedures.

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