

Abstract

1. Background

Although the majority of women experience perineal pain following childbirth, they endure pain during early postpartum. Perineal pain persisting beyond the immediate postpartum period may warrant further evaluation and may have long-term effects, such as anxiety about sexual intercourse or negative impact on their next delivery. In most cases, analgesics are used for early postpartum perineal pain, however nursing care remain unclear.

2. Purpose

To explore factors and nursing care influencing early postpartum perineal pain and examine those relationships.

3. Method

A questionnaire survey was conducted in nine hospitals and maternity homes within urban areas in Japan and 503 women who had a vaginal and full-term delivery participated; 425 responses (84.5%) were valid and analyzed statistically. Additional demographic and obstetrical data were obtained from medical records.

4. Results

- 1) A visual analogue scale indicating degree of pain was used on the day of delivery, the second and the fourth day postpartum. Factors associated with early postpartum perineal pain included: “over the age of 35”, “primiparous”, “supine position at delivery” and “episiotomy” ($p < .05$). Women with episiotomies felt significantly greater pain and less pain relief from the day of delivery to the fourth day postpartum than those with second-degree lacerations ($p < .05$).
- 2) Postnatal women experienced: “difficulty sitting”, “loss of volition”, “difficulties with excretion and cleanliness” and “difficulty moving” because of perineal pain. Those with an episiotomy found their daily life more difficult than those with a second-degree laceration ($p < .001$).
- 3) 74.8% of women were afraid of resuming sexual intercourse after one month postpartum. Disruption of daily life because of perineal pain affected their anxiety about resumption of sexual intercourse.
- 4) At least 90% of women understood about perineal pain from midwives or their families, and the majority of advisers about pain were midwives or nurses.

Psychological support could enhance satisfaction with perineal care and reduce anxiety about resumption of sexual intercourse.

5) For postpartum perineal pain, 29.2% used analgesics but the rate of women who received perineal care was only 14.1%. Women's satisfaction with perineal care was significantly lower than with postnatal care ($p < .001$).

5. Conclusion

Factors associated with early postpartum perineal pain included; "over the age of 35", "primiparous", "supine position at delivery" and "episiotomy". It is very important to develop nursing care for perineal pain because there were few women who received perineal care, and women's satisfaction with perineal care was lower than with postnatal care.