



# Through Their Eyes – A Qualitative Study on the Lived Experience of Women in Obstetric Emergencies

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## INTRODUCTION

Obstetric emergencies can have a significant impact on the emotional well-being of women. (1). Understanding the emotions experienced by women during these events is essential to provide appropriate support and care to reduce the risk of adverse mental health outcomes. Maternal mental health issues can affect a woman's overall well-being during pregnancy and the postpartum period (2). These conditions, if not addressed, may lead to complications, and adversely affect maternal outcomes (3).

## AIMS

This project aimed to explore the perceptions and emotions experienced by women during obstetric emergencies, identify contributing factors to these emotions, and recognise those which provided both positive and negative outcomes for these women.

## METHODOLOGY

Qualitative data was collected through in-depth interviews with women who had experienced obstetric emergencies. Authors generated initial codes which captured key concepts and themes which were then refined. These were used to identify factors to improve patient care during obstetric emergencies.

## RESULTS: DEMOGRAPHICS

Mean Age	31.8 years old
Parity	50% Primiparous, 50% multiparous
Gestation	36+2 (34+4-41+1) Weeks gestation
C/S Category	87% Category 2 , 13% Category 3
Comorbidities	PET, GDMI, Mental Health, BMI, IUGR



## Communication

Some women reported too little information during pivotal moments and some reporting to too much information invoking anxiety. A majority of the feedback was that good communication provided reassurance and positive outcomes. ***“Everyone was really friendly and I thought that and the communication was great, whenever I asked for something, everyone was always there to help.”***

Effective and empathetic communication between healthcare providers and patients is crucial, especially during high-stress situations like childbirth. It is important to utilise emotional intelligence to allow for appropriate counselling without causing undue anxiety and distress.

## Strong feelings of Fear and happiness

***“I remember being really scared. Scared and shocked because I had severe pre eclampsia.”*** Strong feelings, especially of fear and shock were common. The reassurances and explanations by staff had positive impacts on patient’s experience.

***“I remember everyone being very lovely to me.”***

WOMENS EXPECTATIONS

INFORMED DECISION MAKING

PATIENT EDUCATION

PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT

CONTINUITY OF CARE

POST DISCHARGE CARE

## Partner Support

The partners perception of the experience was also important to many of the women.

***“He felt well informed most of the time. He felt like it was a good experience for him as well.”*** This emphasizes the need to provide information and support to partners during childbirth, especially when they are asked to step out of the room or when unexpected complications arise.

ENHANCED COMMUNICATION

SUPPORTIVE STAFF

PARTNER EDUCATION & SUPPORT

## Continuity of Care

Some interviewees had previously given birth at the same facility, and their positive experience influenced their decision to return. This underscores the importance of consistently providing good care to build trust with patients. ***“I told my friends at mothers group to birth there.”***

Some women highlighted that the experience felt less personal when they didn't know the staff and there was no continuity of care. This lack of continuity seems to have caused some discomfort. This supports the hospitals continuous efforts in facilitating continuity of care.

***“It was certainly less personal than my other ones in that way. I had people constantly coming in and out.”***

## Antenatal Education

Better preparation and discussions at the early stages of pregnancy may have better outcomes. ***“I probably could have been told a little bit more on a caesarean section.”***

This indicates the importance of providing comprehensive prenatal education and addressing potential scenarios, including C-sections, to help mothers make informed choices and feel more mentally prepared.

## DISCUSSION

This study emphasizes the importance of emotional support and effective communication during obstetric emergencies. Healthcare providers need to be aware of the emotional impact these events have on women and how to provide appropriate support to promote emotional well-being. Further research is necessary to develop interventions that can help mitigate the emotional impact of obstetric emergencies on women and their families.

## REFERENCES

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