

ABSTRACT

Background: Pregnancy is one of the life-changing periods of life for the first-time mothers. Every woman is experiencing psychological and physiological transitions in a different individual way. First-time mothers are learning how to accept and identify themselves with a role of mother. Social support is an important factor for pregnant women's assistance. First-time mothers are using books, internet, pregnancy counselling and prenatal courses as a way how to get needful information. Perception of their body image is changing during pregnancy and after delivery

Objectives: The aim of this study is to capture individual experiences of woman with psychological and physiological transitions during their first pregnancy and to find out which factors are important in experiencing them. Secondary aims were discovering these areas: if women are identifying themselves with a role of mother, how are women getting information about pregnancy, how are women perceiving physical changes of their bodies, how important is the role of social support in managing pregnancy, what kind of expectations did women have about pregnancy.

Methods: The thesis is designed as a qualitative research carried out with six respondents from different parts of Czech Republic. The sample was selected by intentional sampling and a snowball method. Criterion was to be a first-time mother in third trimester of pregnancy or one year after delivery at the most. Data was collected by using half-structured interviews which were analyzed by open coding method.

Results: Maternity was something completely unknown for respondents, however the personal experience brought a new dimension to it and the identification with the role of mother came true quite fast. Sufficient knowledge helped first-time mothers to experience pregnancy in more positive way because knowledge made them feel sure and safe. Perception of women's body image was strongly influenced by their weight changes during pregnancy and after delivery. Frustration and decrease of confidence came after failing in gaining their former proportions back. Support of close relatives signally improved experiencing pregnancy. The most important person for women was partner. Respondents were positively surprised by the course of pregnancy, because they had worse expectations before. Only few of them experienced mood fluctuation as well as postnatal depression.

Conclusion: This study was intended to understand women experiencing their first pregnancy. Its results will help to understand first-time mother's needs and can be an impulse to improve the level of provided health care. Information leaflet providing brief summary of important information about pregnancy is an outcome of this study.

keywords: *pregnancy, primipara, psychosomatics, experience, social support*