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Experiences of women with the support they received from their birth companions during labour and delivery in Malawi

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Author(s)

Esther Kungwimba, Address Malata, Alfred Maluwa, Ellen Chirwa

ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to describe the experiences of primiparous women with the support they received from their birth companions during labour and delivery in Malawi. The study design was descriptive and utilized qualitative data collection and analysis method on a sample of 20 primiparous women. The women were recruited from the postnatal ward of Bwaila hospital and were interviewed regarding their experiences on the support they received from their birth companions during labour and delivery using an open ended interview guide. Data was manually analyzed using content analysis. Primiparous women described the support they received from their birth companions as useful and beneficial. Birth companions provided advice, physical, emotional and spiritual support to the women during their labour and delivery. In addition, the birth companions were viewed as guardians of the women during labour and delivery. Results however, show that some women were not properly assisted by their companions because both the mothers and companions lacked knowledge on birth companionship. The results further show that birth companions play important roles during the birth and delivery of primiparous women and thereby improving birth outcomes. Therefore, there is a need to train the companions regarding support to a woman during labour and delivery. Primiparous women also need to be trained during antenatal care education so that they properly understand the roles of a birth companion as opposed to those of the midwives.

KEYWORDS

Primiparous Woman; Birth Companion; Labour; Delivery Support; Antenatal Clinic Education; Birth Experience

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