

SUMMARY

The postpartum period covers a critical transitional time for a woman, her newborn and her family, on physiological, emotional and social level. The main goals of nursing care in postpartum period are to assist and support the woman's recovery to the pregnant state, assess and identify deviations from norms, and educate the mother about her own self-care and infant care. Moreover, quality health care during and immediately after the critical period of delivery is a single most important intervention for preventing maternal and newborn mortality and morbidity.

Quality of care is determined by the knowledge and skills of the nurse's assessment. In order to deliver high quality of care, the nurse must be able to perform effectively and must be competent in the application of theory and skills in the clinical situation.

The present study aimed to improve the quality of immediate postpartum nursing care. This aim would be achieved through - teaching nurses about immediate postpartum nursing care to improve their knowledge, training nurses about immediate postpartum nursing procedures to improve their practice and evaluating nurses' outcome knowledge and practice.

This study included all nurses working in the obstetric ward at Benha University Hospital. They were 40 nurses in different age, qualification, who nursing women with normal vaginal delivery and working throughout three shifts. Tools used for data collection were: sheet to cover general characteristics of nurses, handout about immediate postpartum nursing care for teaching nurses and tools of evaluation

divided into: (a) interviewing questionnaire included questions of nurses knowledge about quality of immediate postpartum nursing care (b) observation checklist included standards of nursing care during postpartum period. A pilot study was performed, necessary modifications were also done. Both tools of evaluation assessed nurses' level of knowledge and practice before / after 3 months of implementing the study. Teaching and training were implemented into 9 sessions.

The main findings of this study generally revealed the following:

- Improvement in nurses' knowledge and practice after teaching and training regarding care provided during immediate postpartum period, except some aspects of care such as infection control measures and immediate care of newborn.
- There was negative correlation between nurses' knowledge and their practice before and after teaching and training in relation to their age and years of experience.
- There was positive significant correlation between nurses' knowledge and their practice after teaching and training.
- There was poor structure of the postpartum unit due to lack of enough illumination and ventilation, cleanliness not available along the day, insufficient furniture and lack of equipment and supplies in the unit.

The study recommended the following:

- Refreshment of nurses' knowledge and practice through periodic educational program for nurses in immediate postpartum unit to upgrade their knowledge and improve their practice

- Simple booklets, handouts and pamphlets with updated knowledge and practice about postpartum nursing care should be available in the unit.
- Establish job description and specification for nurses of postpartum unit.
- Provide adequate supplies and facilities to encourage nurses to follow the standardized techniques.
- Provide adequate supervision, guidance and regular feedback to nurses about their performance evaluation will help in improving their skills and ensure quality of care.
- Establish nursing quality care committee in the hospital responsible for setting standards and evaluating the quality of nursing care periodically.