Quality of Life of Mothers and Their Partner (Spouse) Following the Birth of a Child

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Background

• Childbirth has a substantial impact on the daily routine & QOL of new parents

• Most “QOL studies” of childbearing women focus on physical/functional function

• No existing QOL studies of spouses of childbearing women
WHOQOL Instrument

Physical
- Pain
- Energy
- Sleep

Psychological
- Concentration
- Self-esteem
- Body image
- Negative feelings

Independence
- Mobility
- ADL’s
- Medication
- Work capacity

Social
- Relationships
- Social support
- Sexual activity

Environment
- Safety
- Home
- Finances
- Social care
- New info.
- Leisure
- Transport

Spiritual
- Safety
- Spiritual
Objective

- To describe the impact of childbirth on the QOL of new mothers and their partner (spouse) using the WHOQOL-100 instrument.
Methods - Respondent Profile

• 64 U.S. English-speaking woman-partner dyads

• Women required to be pregnant, co-habiting with partner, & generally excited about childbirth
Data Collection

• Mail administration of the WHOQOL
  
  T1: 1 month before childbirth
  T2: 2 months after childbirth

• Response rate ~ 87%
Analysis

• ANOVA to determine compare facet change scores (post - pre-childbirth) in women vs. their partner

• Regression to determine predictive factors (e.g., parity status) of QOL after childbirth
Results - Sample Characteristics

- Age (mean, S.D.)
  Women 30 (6.2)
  Partners 32 (6.4)

- Ethnicity ~
  82% Caucasian
  6% Hispanic
  12% Other

- Parity status ~
  54% primiparas
  46% multiparas

- Delivery type ~
  80% vaginal
  20% cesarean
Quality of Life Changes Following Childbirth in Women and Their Partners
## Predictive Factors of QOL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
<th>Physical</th>
<th>Psychological</th>
<th>Independence</th>
<th>Social</th>
<th>Environment</th>
<th>Spiritual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong> (continuous)</td>
<td>.09 (.28)</td>
<td>.07 (.28)</td>
<td>.12 (.17)</td>
<td>-.61 (.34)</td>
<td>-.02 (.24)</td>
<td>.09 (.37)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Childbirth complication</strong> (0=no)</td>
<td><strong>-9.69</strong> (4.04)</td>
<td>-4.87 (4.05)</td>
<td><strong>-4.87</strong> (2.39)</td>
<td>-6.94 (5.02)</td>
<td>3.27 (3.44)</td>
<td><strong>-3.31</strong> (5.63)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Type of delivery</strong> (0=vaginal)</td>
<td>.53 (3.48)</td>
<td>-1.05 (3.53)</td>
<td>1.58 (2.05)</td>
<td>-1.18 (4.30)</td>
<td>.009 (3.02)</td>
<td>4.01 (4.75)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong> (0=partner)</td>
<td><strong>-9.70</strong> (3.65)</td>
<td>-4.41 (3.15)</td>
<td>-4.28 (2.51)</td>
<td>-6.08 (3.71)</td>
<td>-.32 (2.65)</td>
<td><strong>-5.38</strong> (4.07)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong> (0 – 20+)</td>
<td>.80 (.64)</td>
<td><strong>1.22</strong> (0.648)</td>
<td>.07 (.39)</td>
<td>.31 (.77)</td>
<td>.66 (.57)</td>
<td>.34 (.88)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnicity</strong> (0=Cauc.)</td>
<td>-1.53 (1.11)</td>
<td>-.77 (1.11)</td>
<td>-.06 (2.34)</td>
<td>-.49 (1.39)</td>
<td>-1.06 (.94)</td>
<td><strong>-10.46</strong> (5.32)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Baby’s health</strong> (1=poor to 5=excellent)</td>
<td>5.52 (3.24)</td>
<td>4.82 (3.25)</td>
<td>1.14 (1.19)</td>
<td><strong>16.70</strong>† (3.92)</td>
<td><strong>7.37</strong>*** (2.74)</td>
<td><strong>15.93</strong>‡ (4.38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of children</strong> (0=none)</td>
<td>-.38 (2.98)</td>
<td>-4.75 (3.03)</td>
<td>.23 (1.76)</td>
<td>-5.69 (3.84)</td>
<td>-4.93 (2.79)</td>
<td>.22 (4.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Baseline WHOQOL domain score</strong></td>
<td>-.13 (.12)</td>
<td>-.13 (.12)</td>
<td><strong>.19</strong> (0.08)</td>
<td>-.168 (.16)</td>
<td>-.19 (.12)</td>
<td>.08 (.10)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05 **p < .02 ***p < .009 † p < .005 ‡ p < .0001
Study Limitations

• Resource constraints dictated small, culturally homogenous sample

• Did not include high-risk mothers
Conclusions

• First study to examine QOL in both childbearing women and their partners

• Results may have important policy and clinical implications