



Review article

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Consequences of COVID-19 on Maternity Care

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Introduction: The COVID-19 pandemic now expanding rapidly as the virus affects many lives, including those of pregnant women and infants. It is becoming clear that this virus will be with us for many months or even years, and further peaks of infection may occur. Health care professionals have voiced concerns publically that they are not protected sufficiently. Nurses who work in maternal health serves are considered a basic part of health care professional A new norm is needed for maternity care and services. To develop high quality COVID-relevant solutions we need a pro-active strategy, grounded in evidence and co-created with women, families, and staff.

Keywords: COVID-19, Maternity Care, Consequences

Introduction

Antenatal care services are designed to provide women with frequent face-to-face appointments for medical check-ups, screenings, education and psychological support (an average of 14 check-ups during pregnancy).To reduce the risk of infection, national policies have suggested eliminating nonessential hospital appointments .consequently; women follow up in private clinical

Moreover, the pandemic has forced hospitals and clinics to cancel most face-to-face antenatal classes. Due to COVID-19, women are giving birth alone, without the presence of any family members. This is led to an increased level of anxiety and sense of isolation among both women and their families, especially in the case of caesarean birth, which requires a longer hospital stay ^(1, 2).

Implications of COVID-19 on Maternity Care

COVID-19 has created an urgent need for more front line direct-care nurses. Both students and new graduates are entering a highly stressed health system without appropriate preparation, supervision, and support. These novice practitioners are liable to place women and other health care professionals at further risk ⁽³⁾.

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The international guidelines to provide quality care to pregnant and postpartum women the

main priorities for maternity care are the health system must continue to support the health professionals who provide this care, and enable them to do the job that women and their babies and families need, Ensuring that maternity staff can practice in safe conditions such as access to appropriate personal protective equipment Instructors at faculty of nursing must maintain their educator role during this crisis as nursing education; and high-quality nursing education must be maintained to safeguard the health of women principles are drawn from evidence on quality care and current information on maternity care in this pandemic, Continue to provide evidence-informed, equitable, safe, respectful, and compassionate care for the physical and mental health of all women and newborn infants, Protect the human rights of women and newborn infants, Ensure strict hygiene measures, and social distancing when possible ,Maintain community services and continuity if possible ^(2,3), Prevent unnecessary interventions, Enable close contact between mother and newborn infant from birth, Continue in promoting and supporting women in breast feeding, Involve women, families, and staff in co-designing and implementing changes during crisis. Monitor the impact of changes including assessment of un anticipated consequences duo to COVID-19, Protect and support maternity and neonatal staff and students, including their mental health needs, and Develop innovative systems for remote maternity care, including additional interventions for maternal support and anxiety management for women and their families.

The Egyptian Ministry of Health must be taking the first steps toward remote midwifery support for pregnant and postpartum women on a national level. Train all midwives on using technology and Tele care platforms efficiently, such as using online video conferencing services such as Zoom to sustain antenatal care groups as well as health monitoring, education and supportive care for new mothers. Adapt international guidelines to the specific needs of Egyptian, taking into consideration the particular structures of the

Egyptian health care system and maternity care, including cultural norms⁽⁴⁾

Midwives in Egypt, as in the rest of the world, are making extraordinary efforts to provide women and their families with a safe and positive experience of pregnancy and childbirth. They are instrumental for the health of mothers and their babies. Even though we are in the midst of a pandemic, women are still getting pregnant, and babies are still being born. It is imperative to support and equip our midwives in the best way we can, so they can continue to support the bringing of new life into the world⁽⁵⁾.

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