A5-8: Caring for Laboring Women with Histories of Childhood Sexual Abuse

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**Abstract Categories:**
Thematic Areas: Women's Health
Abstract:
Introduction: The incidence of childhood sexual abuse (CSA) among American women is estimated to be 1 in 5. Nurses supporting women during childbirth may be unaware of the impact of CSA on the birth experience. The purpose of this project was to provide a comprehensive review of the literature to identify evidence-based interventions to support laboring women with histories of CSA.

Method(s): A thorough and systematic review of the literature was conducted to answer the following question: what are the best practices nurses can use to optimize the birth experiences of women with histories of CSA? Six databases were searched: PsychInfo, PubMed, CINAHL, Cochrane Library, Science Direct, and Web of Science using key terms sexual abuse, labor, and childbirth. Searches were limited to English language and publications after 1989. Of the 345 articles retrieved, duplicates, titles not addressing the research question, editorials and book reviews were eliminated. The remaining 55 articles were reviewed and ancestry searches conducted. The final 16 articles consisted of 1 systematic review, 3 cross-sectional surveys, 2 case reports and 10 expert opinions. Findings were compiled and compared in tabular form.

Results: Analysis revealed a high degree of concordance regarding patient characteristics and recommended interventions. Common themes included a history of chronic pelvic pain, GI disorders, dysmenorrhea, depression, and late prenatal care. Common themes during labor included prolonged labor, difficult second stage, hyper-vigilance or overly cooperative behavior and dissociation. Recommended interventions included routine screening for CSA, asking permission to touch, minimizing the number of vaginal exams, offering detailed explanations, and grounding techniques. While themes were consistent, there were no intervention trials, significant methodological weaknesses in the survey studies and case reports, a large proportion of expert opinion articles and extensive cross-referencing.

Discussion & Conclusions: The available evidence on this topic is scanty and low level. Given the prevalence of CSA, additional research is clearly indicated. Nurses may wish to implement recommended interventions as there is little risk of harm, but there is no evidence of their efficacy.

Abstract History:
This abstract has not been presented or accepted for presentation in whole or in part at the SNRS or other scientific meeting.

Financial Disclosure:
No, I (or a member of my immediate family) have not received something of value* from or own stock (or stock options) in a commercial company or institution related directly or indirectly to the subject of my presentation.

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I will not be describing any pharmaceutical and/or medical device.

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