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CONSUMER SATISFACTION AND MATERNITY CARE

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Psychology at Massey University

Tony Peter Christensen
1993
The present study investigated women's satisfaction with maternity care using a self-administered questionnaire. The purpose of the present study was twofold: first, to address a series of specific questions posed by the health provider and to provide feedback on the findings. Secondly, to examine the nature of consumer satisfaction with maternity care as a psychological construct from both a multidimensional and global perspective. The measure of global satisfaction was derived from items of the frequently used Consumer Satisfaction Questionnaire - 8, whilst, the discrete (multidimensional) aspects of the questionnaire were derived from a pilot study, literature search and suggestions from the nursing personnel of the six maternity units assessed. Careful consideration was given to predispositional factors (e.g., life satisfaction) and the effects of demand characteristics, particularly reactivity, sampling error and response bias. Two hundred and forty-seven of the five hundred and thirty-eight women surveyed returned the questionnaire. The results showed high levels of global satisfaction with antenatal services, labour and delivery care, post-partum care and global satisfaction with maternity care in general. Multiple regression analysis showed satisfaction with maternity care to be a multidimensional construct with several discrete aspects of care significantly associated with the mother's global impression of each stage of their maternity care and their global satisfaction. The results also showed discrete aspects of the service with which mothers were especially dissatisfied. The methodological approach used in the present study and the statistical methods used to analyse the data were found to be especially useful in identifying areas in which the service could be improved, in addition to facilitating meaningful comparisons between similar facilities in the future.
For Johnathan Peter Christensen who inspired and ensured my continuing interest in the Psychology of Obstetric and Paediatric care, and Dr. Geof Aitken whose gentle ways and devotion to his tiny patients diminishes the pain of the bewildered parents.
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