Enhancing maternal outcomes: The role of evidence-based practices in obstetric nursing care.

Carolina Helmi*

Department of Health, Medicine and Care Nursing and Reproductive Health, Linköping University, Sweden

Introduction

Obstetric nursing plays a pivotal role in ensuring the health and well-being of mothers and their newborns. As healthcare continues to advance, evidence-based practices (EBPs) have become central to improving maternal outcomes, reducing complications, and delivering safe, effective care. By integrating research findings with clinical expertise and patient preferences, obstetric nurses contribute significantly to the provision of high-quality care during pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period [1].

Evidence-based practices are founded on the best available scientific evidence, clinical expertise, and patient-centered care. In obstetric nursing, where every decision can profoundly impact maternal and neonatal outcomes, EBPs ensure that interventions are both safe and effective. From managing high-risk pregnancies to supporting normal deliveries, EBPs empower nurses to make informed decisions that enhance outcomes and improve patient satisfaction [2].

The adoption of EBPs also reduces variability in care, minimizing the risk of errors and unnecessary interventions. In addition, nurses who rely on evidence-based approaches are better equipped to address the unique challenges posed by diverse patient populations, ensuring equitable and individualized care [3].

Prenatal care is critical to identifying and addressing potential risks early in pregnancy. Evidence supports regular monitoring of maternal and fetal health through comprehensive prenatal visits. Obstetric nurses play a key role in educating mothers about nutrition, exercise, and lifestyle modifications to promote healthy pregnancies. Early detection of conditions such as gestational diabetes, preeclampsia, or anemia allows timely interventions that improve maternal and fetal outcomes [4].

Routine interventions such as labor induction, continuous electronic fetal monitoring, or episiotomies are often used without clear medical indications. Evidence suggests that these practices should be applied judiciously, as they may increase the risk of complications such as cesarean delivery or prolonged recovery times. Obstetric nurses advocate for evidence-based alternatives, such as intermittent monitoring or natural labor progression, to reduce unnecessary interventions and support physiological childbirth [5].

Immediate skin-to-skin contact between mother and newborn has been shown to enhance bonding, stabilize neonatal vital signs, and promote successful breastfeeding. Obstetric nurses are instrumental in facilitating this practice immediately after birth, provided both mother and baby are stable. This evidence-based approach fosters a strong maternal-infant connection and contributes to better long-term health outcomes for both [6].

Managing pain during labor and delivery is a critical aspect of obstetric care. Evidence supports a range of pain management options, including epidurals, non-pharmacological techniques like breathing exercises, hydrotherapy, and labor support from doulas. Obstetric nurses guide mothers in choosing pain management strategies that align with their preferences and medical needs, ensuring a positive birthing experience [7].

Breastfeeding offers numerous health benefits for both mothers and babies, including reduced risk of infections, obesity, and certain chronic diseases. Evidence-based breastfeeding support involves educating mothers about proper latching techniques, addressing common challenges, and creating a supportive environment for nursing. Obstetric nurses provide hands-on guidance and resources to encourage successful breastfeeding practices [8].

The application of EBPs in obstetric nursing has been shown to reduce maternal mortality, decrease the incidence of preterm births, and minimize complications such as postpartum hemorrhage. Neonates benefit from better birth weights, lower rates of neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) admissions, and improved overall health. Patients who receive evidence-based care are more likely to feel confident in their care providers and satisfied with their birthing experiences. Obstetric nurses who involve mothers in decision-making foster a sense of empowerment and trust, contributing to positive healthcare experiences [9].

EBPs help reduce unnecessary medical interventions, hospital stays, and readmissions, leading to significant cost savings for both healthcare systems and families. While EBPs offer numerous benefits, their implementation is not without challenges. Barriers include resistance to change, lack of access to current research, and limited resources in certain healthcare settings. To overcome these obstacles, healthcare organizations must invest in ongoing education, provide

***Correspondence to:** Carolina Helmi, Department of Health, Medicine and Care Nursing and Reproductive Health, Linköping University, Sweden. E-mail: carolina.helemi@liu.se

***Received:** 27-Sep-2024, Manuscript No. AAICCN-24-154545; **Editor assigned:** 28-Sep-2024, Pre QC No. AAICCN-24-154545(PQ); **Reviewed:** 14-Oct-2024, QC No AAICCN-24-154545; **Revised:** 19-Oct-2024, Manuscript No. AAICCN-24-154545(R); **Published:** 28-Oct-2024, DOI:10.35841/AAICCN-7.5.228*

***Citation:** Helmi C. Enhancing maternal outcomes: The role of evidence-based practices in obstetric nursing care. J Intensive Crit Care Nurs. 2024;7(5):228*

access to evidence-based guidelines, and promote a culture of continuous improvement [10].

Conclusion

Evidence-based practices in obstetric nursing are essential to enhancing maternal outcomes and ensuring safe, high-quality care. By integrating the latest research with compassionate, patient-centered approaches, obstetric nurses play a transformative role in maternal health. As the healthcare landscape evolves, ongoing commitment to EBPs will remain vital in advancing the field of obstetrics and improving the lives of mothers and their newborns.

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Citation: *Helmi C. Enhancing maternal outcomes: The role of evidence-based practices in obstetric nursing care. J Intensive Crit Care Nurs. 2024;7(5):228*