

Publication

Safe start at home : what parents of newborns need after early discharge from hospital - a focus group study

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The length of postpartum hospital stay is decreasing internationally. Earlier hospital discharge of mothers and newborns decreases postnatal care or transfers it to the outpatient setting. This study aimed to investigate the experiences of new parents and examine their views on care following early hospital discharge.; Six focus group discussions with new parents (n=24) were conducted. A stratified sampling scheme of German and Turkish-speaking groups was employed. A 'playful design' method was used to facilitate participants communication wherein they used blocks and figurines to visualize their perspectives on care models The visualized constructions of care models were photographed and discussions were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Text and visual data was thematically analyzed by a multi-professional group and findings were validated by the focus group participants.; Following discharge, mothers reported feeling physically strained during recuperating from birth and initiating breastfeeding. The combined requirements of infant and self-care needs resulted in a significant need for practical and medical support. Families reported challenges in accessing postnatal care services and lacking inter-professional coordination. The visualized models of ideal care comprised access to a package of postnatal care including monitoring, treating and caring for the health of the mother and newborn. This included home visits from qualified midwives, access to a 24-h helpline, and domestic support for household tasks. Participants suggested that improving inter-professional networks, implementing supervisors or a centralized coordinating center could help to remedy the current fragmented care.; After hospital discharge, new parents need practical support, monitoring and care. Such support is important for the health and wellbeing of the mother and child. Integrated care services including professional home visits and a 24-hour help line may help meet the needs of new families.

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