Research Project

Maternal Autonomy in Obstetric Decision-Making

Third-party funded project

Project title Maternal Autonomy in Obstetric Decision-Making
Principal Investigator(s) Rost, Michael ;
Organisation / Research unit
Ethik / Bio- und Medizinethik (Elger)
Department
Project start 01.03.2019
Probable end 28.02.2021
Status Completed

In Switzerland, annually more than 165.000 mothers and fathers experience the birth of their child. These parents hope for a normal and good birth. However, over the past years, an increasing number of women publicly opened up about negative birth experiences. They reported instances of humiliation, violence, coercion, or manipulation. In fact, research on women's experiences during childbirth indicates that maternal autonomy is insufficiently respected and, hence, that intrapartum decision-making (IP-DM) has to be improved in order to promote women's autonomy, to protect their bodily integrity, and to prevent them from impaired psychological health outcomes.

In light of the widespread occurrence of autonomy-depriving IP-DM, there is an urgent need to study Swiss mothers' and Swiss obstetric staff members' attitudes and motives toward IP-DM. Further, it is recommended that women have access to various types of birth settings (e.g. home, freestanding midwifery unit, hospital). Thus, the aim of this study is to better understand women's and obstetric staff members' attitudes toward IP-DM and to analyze the spatial accessibility of different birth settings in Switzerland.

To fulfill this goal, this study will not only conduct one-on-one interviews with Swiss women and obstetric staff members, but will also carry out a survey in order to gather additional quantitative data from Swiss women. Finally, spatial accessibility analysis will be employed. Accordingly, this project seeks to answer the following guiding research questions:
(1) What are women's attitudes, motives, expectations, and experiences with respect to IP-DM and maternal autonomy?
(2) What are obstetric staff members' attitudes, motives, and experiences with respect to IP-DM and maternal autonomy?
(3) How much value do Swiss women place on the respect for their autonomy in IP-DM, before and after birth, and which principles regarding IP-DM are of cardinal importance for them?
(4) Does access to birth settings differ geographically for Swiss women?

Financed by
University of Basel

Add publication

Published results

4596606, Rost, Michael; De Clercq, Eva; Arnold, Louisa, "Boiling up the problem of violence" in childbirth?- an ethical viewpoint on medical professional responses to women's reports of mistreatment in childbirth, 0935-7335 ; 1437-1618, Ethik in der Medizin, Publication: JournalArticle (Originalarbeit in einer wissenschaftlichen Zeitschrift)

4643090, Rost, Michael; Stuerner, Zelda; Niles, Paulomi; Arnold, Louisa, "Real decision-making is hard to find" - Swiss perinatal care providers' perceptions of and attitudes towards decision-making in birth: A qualitative study, 2667-3215, SSM - Qualitative Research in Health, Publication: JournalArticle (Originalarbeit in einer wissenschaftlichen Zeitschrift)

4645764, Rauch, Sebastian; Arnold, Louisa; Stuerner, Zelda; Rauh, Juergen; Rost, Michael, A true choice of place of birth? Swiss women's access to birth hospitals and birth centers, 1932-6203, PLoS ONE, Publication: JournalArticle (Originalarbeit in einer wissenschaftlichen Zeitschrift)

4655925, Rost, Michael; De Clercq, Eva; Büchler, Andrea; Elger, Bernice, Ethische und rechtliche Einordnung zur Autonomie Gebärender - Encadrement éthique et juridique de l'autonomie des parturientes, 2624-7747, Obstetrica, Publication: Other Publications (Forschungsberichte o. ä.)

4696460, Rost, Michael; Stuerner, Zelda; Niles, Paulomi; Arnold, Louisa, Between "a lot of room for it" and "it doesn't exist"—Advancing and limiting factors of autonomy in birth as perceived by perinatal care practitioners: An interview study in Switzerland, Birth, Publication: JournalArticle (Originalarbeit in einer wissenschaftlichen Zeitschrift)

Add documents

Specify cooperation partners