

ABSTRACT

This study is an integration of two fields : obstetrical assistance and cultural anthropology.

Objective

The aim of the anthropological part of the study is to investigate and compare the different approaches to maternity between those countries, where it was possible to find bibliographic material.

The objective from the obstetrical point of view was firstly to acquire knowledge about the multicultural changes among the female population *and to reconsider the present situation of obstetrical care* . We want to know if health assistance should be modified and if it would be useful for health workers, especially for midwives, to take an “anthropological approach” regarding motherhood.

Materials and methods

We interviewed 28 pregnant women and 22 women who had just delivered, coming from 23 different countries. They were patients in the Obstetrical Wards and Out-patient department of The S.Anna Hospital in Torino, between March and September 2005. We obtained and analyzed anamnestic data and came into contact with the different ways women consider childbirth in their own countries.

Results

From the results, it turned out that 46% of women have been in Italy between one and five years, 42% have been in Italy for more than 5 years and just 12% arrived less than one year ago. We encountered no difficulties in communicating orally with these women. In most cases women approach childbirth with confidence and they are very satisfied with the quality of the health care received, but they miss their family's support, particular after delivery.

Conclusions

In conclusion, we believe that we have to reconsider the network of social support in the post-partum period; to rethink how to improve women's contact with health workers and health care assistance overall; improve health workers training, especially midwives', in order to meet the new demands of immigration put upon the Italian health service.