

Assessing the Informed Consent Practices during Normal Vaginal Delivery Process and Immediate Postpartum Care in Tertiary Level Hospitals of Bangladesh

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Abstract : Informed consent is one of the basic human and ethical rights for childbearing women. It plays a central role in promoting informed decision making between patients and service providers during the labor process. It gives mothers rights to accept or reject any examination and/or procedure, increases the respect and dignity of the mother during pregnancy, delivery and postpartum care. To assess the practices of this right during normal vaginal delivery and immediate postpartum care in tertiary level hospital setting in Bangladesh, a quantitative study with cross-sectional design was conducted in Dhaka Medical College & Hospital (DMCH) and Sir Salimullah Medical College & Mitford Hospital (SSMCH) in Dhaka in November 2015. A prevalence-based sample size of 190 was calculated where prevalence, confidence interval and level of significance were at 9.7%, 98% and 5% respectively. The respondents were the mothers who gave normal vaginal childbirth within past 24 hours and received postpartum care there. They were selected through systematic random sampling technique and their face-to-face interview of 190 mothers was done using a structured questionnaire. Data were entered into the spreadsheet (MS Excel 2013 version) and descriptive analysis of findings was done. The result shows the complete absence of informed consent practices and mostly absence of consented care such as right to information, respect for choices of preferences for examination and/or procedure of childbearing women. Although 95% of the mothers were informed that they were being proceeded with normal vaginal delivery, their choice of preference was absent during the process. Only consent (not informed consent) was taken from 50%-72% mothers for examination (except breast examination '0%') and 8%-83% for any procedures during postpartum care. Only one-ninth (11%) of the mothers could ask service providers regarding the services they received. No consent was taken from 3% of the mothers- neither in the labor process nor in postpartum care. This current practice doesn't comply with the Respectful Maternity Care (RMC) Charter 2011. The issue is not even clarified in the current Standard Clinical Management Protocols of the country. So, improvement of the existing protocol and increased awareness are essential to address this right of child-bearing women and to practice it during normal vaginal delivery and postpartum care.

Keywords : informed consent, normal vaginal delivery, respectful maternity care, tertiary level hospital

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