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Effectiveness of Antenatal Childbirth Massage Class in Prince of Wales Hospital (PWH)

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Introduction

Labour and childbirth are always stressful in many pregnant women. In PWH, non-pharmacological labour pain-relief, such as childbirth massage, use of birth ball and birth companion, is considered as an important approach in mother-friendly practice. A childbirth massage class was set up in 2013 in order to provide more pain-relief choices for couples. A small class approach with maximum 4 couples in a three-hour teaching and hands-on practice in every alternate week are given to women with low risk of pregnancy at 36 weeks of gestation. Couples are encouraged to practice the massage at home and subsequently in the Delivery Suite.

Objectives

To evaluate pregnant women and their partners' response to home massage practice.

Methodology

A telephone follow-up is conducted 2 weeks after the class. 11 questions were given to the pregnant women whereas 9 were given to their partners. Questions were focused on their perspective of home massage. A 5-point Likert scale, from 1 (least agreed) to 5 (most agreed), was used. The average score was used to determine their response to childbirth massage.

Result

A total of 160 couples were attended the antenatal childbirth massage class from October 2014 to October 2015. 132 (82.5%) couples were contacted and completed a telephone interview. The top 5 questions for pregnant women with highest score were (i) "It enhanced our relationship" (4.44); (ii) "I felt relax" (4.38); (iii) "I enjoyed it" (4.28); (iv) "I felt satisfied" (4.25) and (v) "It eased my backache" (3.88). Among questions for their partners, the 5 questions with highest score included (i) "It enhanced our relationship" (4.57); (ii) "I felt I am helpful to my partner" (4.52); (iii) "I enjoyed it" (4.36); (iv) "It made me feel more useful" (4.28) and (v) "I found the massage was straight forward" (3.98). Additional comments from the couples included "very useful" (14 couples), "should be promoted to every pregnant woman" (10 couples), "hope more pregnant woman can join the class" (6 couples), "the overall effect was very good" (4 couples) and "improved the quality of sleep" (3 couples). Conclusion: Both responses and comments of the participants towards the childbirth massage class

were very positive. Their support to the class demonstrated our success in promoting the non-pharmacological pain relief. Besides, evidences showed that pharmacological pain relief would decrease the alertness of both the mother and baby and thus affect early initiation of breastfeeding. Therefore, the effect of massage in delivery process could be explored in future studies.