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MEN'S ATTITUDES TOWARDS PREGNANCY AND CHILDBIRTH

The arrival of a child signifies a profound change in the family's living situation and the partners' willingness, or lack thereof, to commit themselves to the child's care.

Men's attitudes during pregnancy, the act of childbirth, and the care of the newborn are not fully explored, despite the fact that the presence of the father at the birth and the phenomenon of *couvade* have accompanied parturients for a long time, in different cultures and with varying intensity.

In the last decade or so, there have been significant advances in perinatal medicine, and the modern concept of the father's active role in family birth has emerged, stemming from the accumulation of experiences from past family births and the reports and opinions obtained from research on births involving the father.

It seems that accompanying the partner during pregnancy, participating in the birth and the care of the newborn can manifest itself in different ways, depending on the man's attitude to the world, his capacity for empathy, and his bond with his partner.

It, therefore, seems expedient to monitor men's attitudes toward pregnancy and childbirth.

The main aim of the study was to find out women's attitudes to the role of men in pregnancy and childbirth; to find out whether there are differences between women and men in their perception of motherhood, pregnancy, and childbirth; to find out the attitudes of unmarried men who are not yet fathers and men who are about to become fathers and who may or may not have attended a birthing school to their partner's pregnancy and the childbirth act; an attempt to determine the factors influencing the attitude presented and to find out the level of empathy presented and the stress management style of unmarried men not yet in the role of father and men who are about to become fathers and participating or not in a birthing school. Nine research questions and nine hypotheses were posed.

The main study was conducted between 2012 and 2019 and included 800 people in four study groups detailed on the basis of family situations and plans related to procreation. The research method used in the work was a diagnostic survey using self-authored questionnaires and two standardized questionnaires.

In the course of the work, the following conclusions were reached: The women surveyed mostly expected the active participation of their partner in childbirth. The desire to

prepare for childcare, to support a partner, and to gain knowledge about medical topics were the main reasons for the willingness of men to participate in antenatal classes. Significant differences were shown between all the studied groups in the context of the level of coping style. The surveyed men, without significant importance of age, place of residence, duration of the marriage, or the fact of having children, presented a style of coping with a stressful situation focused on the task. After the development of the conclusions, postulates were made regarding the need to conduct intensive, free prenatal education of fathers, which will increase their awareness of the changeability of the situation in which the whole family will find themselves. Bonding with wife and child (already in the prenatal period) should be promoted, men should be made aware of the importance of partnership, and information should be provided about applicable standards and laws related to pregnancy/childbirth, as well as rights regarding the care of a partner after childbirth and childcare.

Accordingly, in line with the recommendations of *The European Quality Assurance Network* for Nursing Care, a standard has been developed for educating men on the support given to the wife/partner during pregnancy, delivery, and after childbirth.