

RESPECTFUL MATERNITY CARE – THE BASIS OF QUALITY MATERNAL PROTECTION

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Abstract

This article highlights the concept of respectful maternity care (RMC) and its significance in ensuring quality maternal protection. The importance of safeguarding the dignity, rights, and well-being of women during pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period is analyzed as a priority task of the healthcare system. The article examines the medical, psychological, and social aspects of a respectful approach, emphasizing the ethical responsibility and communication skills of healthcare professionals in supporting maternal health. Implementing respectful maternity care improves the health of mothers and children, enhances the quality of healthcare services, and strengthens social trust within the community.

Keywords: maternal protection, respectful maternity care, women's rights, childbirth process, medical ethics, healthcare system, woman-centered approach, psychological support

Introduction

Today, maternal and child health protection is one of the most important areas of the healthcare system. Modern medicine is assessed not only by technical and clinical indicators but also by humaneness, respect, and rights-based approaches. Respectful treatment of women in healthcare services is recognized as a fundamental condition for quality maternal protection. Respectful maternity care recognizes a woman not as a passive service recipient but as a conscious decision-maker regarding her health and life. This approach aims to protect both the physical and mental well-being of women during maternity.

Respectful maternity care is a humane approach in healthcare that fully considers the dignity, rights, and needs of the patient. Within maternal protection, this concept excludes any form of violence, discrimination, neglect, or coercion toward women.

This approach is implemented based on the following principles:

- Respect for the woman's dignity and self-worth
- Decision-making based on informed consent
- Adherence to equality and justice
- Protection of privacy and confidentiality
- Consideration of the woman's cultural and social characteristics

Respectful maternity care is a key factor in achieving high-quality maternal protection. When women feel understood and supported, they engage in open communication with healthcare providers, adhere to treatment recommendations, and develop trust in health institutions.

Scientific observations indicate that in healthcare facilities with a respectful environment:

- Obstetric complications decrease
- Maternal and newborn health improves
- Postpartum psychological problems are reduced
- Women's utilization of healthcare services increases

Childbirth is one of the most responsible and emotionally sensitive periods in a woman's life. Ensuring respectful maternity care during this period is of particular importance. Practices that involve using incomprehensible language, performing procedures without consent, or treating women roughly violate human rights.

Respectful childbirth care includes:

- Providing clear and understandable information about medical procedures
- Considering the woman's opinion in decision-making
- Offering pain relief options
- Ensuring personal space and comfort
- Supporting the involvement of family members

A woman should feel capable of independently managing and making decisions about her life and family matters. She should perceive herself as a free individual (autonomy), able to independently regulate her feelings and actions, recognize herself as a subject rather than an object, and understand that she can determine her own destiny.

- Freedom from harm and violation of rights
- Ability to determine her own fate
- Effective communication that enables joint decision-making

Healthcare professionals play a key role in implementing respectful maternity care. Doctors and nurses must possess not only professional knowledge and skills but also high ethical standards and communication competencies.

Key aspects of healthcare professionals' practice include:

- Patience and impartiality
- Understanding the woman's emotional state
- Zero tolerance for discrimination and violence
- Harmonizing professional and humane behavior

Thus, integrating specialized training on respectful maternity care into the education of healthcare staff is of great importance.

Respectful maternity care positively impacts not only individual women's health but also the well-being of society. Improving maternal health contributes to the development of a healthy generation, social stability, and demographic growth. Additionally, respectful treatment of women reinforces gender equality and increases trust in the healthcare system.

Conclusion

In conclusion, respectful maternity care forms the foundation of quality maternal protection. By ensuring the dignity, rights, and well-being of women, maternal health is strengthened, healthcare service efficiency is enhanced, and a healthy generation is nurtured. Widespread implementation of this approach requires collaboration among the healthcare system, medical professionals, and society.

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