What are the postnatal needs of mothers without legal residence.

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Keywords: Postnatal needs, uninsured mothers, short hospital stay

Introduction:

Social inequality in terms of health and early hospital discharge is more common among women without insurance status. Mothers with financial difficulties leave the maternity clinic earlier than insured mothers. This research took place in Brussels, where concern about rising perinatal poverty and where the pilot projects 'shortened hospital stay' also started. This research maps the postnatal needs of mothers without legal residence (WLR) and describes their current perinatal care trajectory in Brussels.

Method:

This is qualitative, descriptive research. Nine different mothers WLR participated in individual in-depth interviews, based on semi-structured topic lists, generated using a thematic analysis. The respondents were from different continents and recruited through five first-line organizations in Brussels.

Results:

Four themes emerged: (1) stressors of mothers WLR, (2) needs of mothers, (3) coping strategies and (4) the organization of health care. Housing stressed most mothers, in addition to financial shortages and administrative complex procedures. In addition, mothers desired employment, free and empathic care. Their coping strategies mainly relied on solidarity of relatives and their belief in God.

Conclusions:

Mothers WLR need basic needs such as housing, food, safety and work. Their need for low-threshold, culture-sensitive care with a confidential adviser who guarantees continuity is much greater than the need for medical consultations. Mothers felt the need to stay longer in the maternity ward. The postnatal home care was fragmented, the first and second line were not coordinated, except when the mothers were staying in an asylum center. Nevertheless, despite their agony, the mothers showed resilience.