Fears associated with childbirth among nulliparous women in Turkey

Objective: to describe fears associated with childbirth and reasons for the fears.

Design: a qualitative study. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews and analysed using content-analysis method. Setting: outpatient maternity clinic of a university hospital in Turkey. Participants: 19 nulliparous pregnant women who stated that they had fear related to childbirth. Findings: women’s fears were related to labour pain, birth-related problems and procedures, attitudes of health-care personnel and sexuality. The reasons for their fears included type and quality of childbirth information, personal characteristics and experiences, maternity ward environment and lack of confidence in health-care personnel. Seven of the women were considering an elective caesarean section. The role of husbands in the childbirth experience was not mentioned by any participants. Key conclusions and implications for practise: women experience considerable fear related to impending childbirth. Considering the potential for negative findings caused by fear, and the likelihood of requesting a caesarean section, it is important for health professionals who provide antenatal care to explore fears related to childbirth. The development and evaluation of formal childbirth education is also recommended. © 2007 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.