Abstract

The increasing rates of caesarean sections worldwide raise critical questions about the effects of such births on women and on their attachment relationship to their infants. This research examined the subjective experiences of women who have experienced both a caesarean section and a vaginal birth (with a particular focus on the caesarean section experience) using semi-structured interviews and a narrative method of analysis. Analysis of the resulting narratives revealed common themes across participants: suffering a traumatic experience, forces of relation, and expectations of birth and bonding. The results of this research indicate that some women whose infants are delivered by caesarean section may experience a subjective feeling of disconnection from their infant as well as profound birth distress. These experiences are presented and explored using the narratives of the women themselves. This research is of particular interest to mental health and birth professionals who may wish to gain a greater understanding of the effects of birth experience.

Keywords: Disconnection; Birth Trauma