

Poor care and the development of trauma

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Implications of poor care on trauma development following childbirth

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Childbirth is a significant and potentially traumatic event in the lives of women. This paper reports the satisfaction and care related factors associated with PTSD at 4-6 weeks and 3 months postpartum for 412 women recruited antenatally and followed up to 3 months after the birth. There was a consistent and statistically strong relationship between variables measuring aspects of satisfaction with care associated with PTSD at 4-6 weeks and 3 months. At 4-6 weeks postpartum there was a statistically significant association between PTSD and the overall poor quality of care [$\chi^2(4) 49.089, <.001$]. Other variables identifying specific aspects of quality of care were also examined. Statistically significant associations were found between variables assessing women's feelings in labour and PTSD at 4-6 weeks. They included feeling worried, frightened or anxious when labour first began; not confident in labour; out of control; frightened; helpless. Similar results were found at 3 months postpartum. The contribution of poor care to the development of these negative feelings will be outlined. Implications for research and practice will be discussed.