

Does the Experience of Birth Trauma Among OBGYNs Differ by Time Since Delivery?

Dang, Dung – Women & Infants Hospital/Alpert Medical School of Brown University

Whelan, Anna - Women & Infants Hospital / Alpert Medical School of Brown University

Griffin, Laurie - Women & Infants Hospital / Alpert Medical School of Brown University

Russo, Melissa - Women & Infants Hospital / Alpert Medical School of Brown University

Ayala, Nina - Women & Infants Hospital / Alpert Medical School of Brown University

Miller, Emily - Women & Infants Hospital / Alpert Medical School of Brown University

Objectives

Although often unacknowledged, birth trauma (BT) is common. OBGYNs may experience trauma during their own births, which can impact how they perceive the care they provide to birthing people. Little is known about how the experience of BT can change as more time passes from the BT. This study aimed to explore how time since delivery can affect the reported experience of BT among OBGYNs.

Methods

This cross-sectional analysis of an IRB-exempt, anonymous survey study of birthing OBGYNs. The questionnaire was distributed electronically via social media to birthing OBGYNs. Responses about their personal experience of BT and how the experience impacted the care they provided to obstetric patients were analyzed by time since the most recent delivery: less than 1 year, 1-5 years, 6-10 years and more than 10 years. Bivariable analyses were performed using Kruskal-Wallis H test.

Results

A total of 675 responses were collected: 85 (12.6%) respondents were less than 1 year since delivery, 267 (39.6%) were between 1-5 years, 117 (17.3%) were between 6-10 years, and 127 (18.8%) were more than 10 years since their most recent birth. People who had a more recent birth were significantly more likely to report worry of their own health during their birth ($p=0.02$). Other BT experience and the impacts on patient care did not significantly dissipate over time since last delivery. The majority of respondents report positive impacts on their patient care experience after the experience of traumatic birth (table 1).

Conclusions

Our analysis shows that birth experiences can leave long-lasting impacts on birthing OBGYNs, as reports of birthing experiences and their effects on patient care did not appear to significantly differ over time. Although the BT experience did not negatively affect patient care, there are potential, persistent adverse effects on the OBGYN's own wellbeing and mental health. As a specialty, we should focus efforts on improving support structures for our colleagues when they return to work after parental leave.

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Disclosures

None