

Midwives-led intervention program to reduce fear of childbirth in pregnant women: a Portuguese project in development



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I. troductio. a. d objecti-

ves: In the international literature there are studies that evaluated the effects of interventions to reduce the fear of childbirth in pregnant women, conducted by multidisciplinary teams or midwives teams. The results showed a positive impact on some variables related to women's health and well-being, as well in obstetric outcomes and the evaluation of the experience of childbirth and postpartum. However, more research is needed to understand the distinctive role of midwives. In Portugal, knowledge and intervention on fear of childbirth is still scarce, therefore it is proposed the implementation and evaluation of a midwives-led intervention program for reduction of fear of childbirth in pregnant women.

Methodology: Development of complex interventions, based a cluster randomized trial. The sample will consist of pregnant women attending the childbirth education. Participants will be recruited and selected during the second trimester (20-24 weeks of pregnancy) and during prenatal surveillance visits. The intervention protocol will be implemented between 24 and 34 weeks. The data collection instruments will be applied in two

moments, the first being at 36 weeks of pregnancy and the second at 6 weeks postpartum. Ethical issues will be assured.

Results a. d discussio. : In relation to pregnant women who received only the standard intervention (childbirth education), the implementation of midwives-led intervention program intends to contribute to the reduction of the levels of fear of childbirth before and after childbirth; obtaining better obstetric outcomes; reducing the number of cesarean section requests and obtaining a better experience and satisfaction with childbirth.

Co. clusio. s: Fear of childbirth is a universal phenomenon, which negatively affects a significant number of women before and during pregnancy, during labour and after childbirth. Therefore, it is considered clinically and socially relevant the implementation of interventions, in the National Health Service, that aim to reduce the fear of childbirth. Helping pregnant women to reframe their expectations and improve their knowledge and confidence levels in relation to childbirth are fundamental strategies to promote normal birth and improve their quality of reproductive health.

KEYWORDS:

fear of childbirth; midwives; pregnancy; reproductive health; women.