

Assessment of Male Partner Needs and Experiences during Labor and Birth

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Introduction to the Problem

Traditional roles have changed



Assumptions:

He will be present during labor & birth

He will be primary support

Male companion = husband

Male companion = father of baby

Purpose & Aims of Project

- ▶ To conduct a survey of male partner feelings, needs, and satisfaction during labor and birth.
- ▶ To determine if the results match literature
- ▶ To evaluate if there are additional needs

Background & Significance of Problem Related to Healthcare

- ▶ Over 4 million births in the U.S. each year
- ▶ Male partners present in majority
- ▶ No assessment of his needs
- ▶ If poor coping
 - Miscommunication
 - Tension
 - Anger
 - Affect birth experience

Synthesis of Evidence

- ▶ Six studies since 1976 on male partner experience in labor & birth
- ▶ Limitations of research
 - White Middle class
 - Married Educated
- ▶ Gaps in research
 - Husband vs. boyfriend vs. father of baby
 - Cultural differences
 - Term vs. preterm
 - Environmental factors

Research Questions

1. What are the feelings of the male partner regarding labor and birth experience?
2. What are unmet needs of male partners during labor and birth?

Practice Setting

- ▶ VUSN Nurse–Midwife Practice
 - 21 Certified Nurse–Midwives
 - Two practice sites
 - About 3,000 births yearly at VMC
 - 800 babies yearly by midwife practice

Project Plan & Methodology

- ▶ IRB approved study
- ▶ Convenience sample of 60 male partners
- ▶ Inclusion: English speaking, 18 yr or older, term, live birth, vaginal birth or unplanned cesarean section

Survey development

- ▶ 25 questions
- ▶ Reviewed to clarify questions
- ▶ Questions framed based on literature review
- ▶ Survey not an established validated tool

Project Plan & Methodology

- ▶ Envelope with invitation & survey inside within 24 hours following birth experience
- ▶ Men completed survey
- ▶ CNM picked up survey with next postpartum rounds
- ▶ Sealed surveys placed in box in a locked call room for investigator to retrieve and review

Results: Demographics

- ▶ 41 surveys distributed
- ▶ 32 returned, all were completed
- ▶ Response rate of 78%

Results: Demographics

- ▶ Race
 - White $n = 26$ (81 %)
 - Black $n = 3$ (9 %)
 - Other $n = 3$ (9 %)
- ▶ Marital status
 - Married $n = 31$ (97 %)
 - Single $n = 1$ (3 %)
- ▶ Living in same household
 - Yes $n = 32$ (100%)

Note: percentages are rounded

Results: Participant information

▶ Number of baby

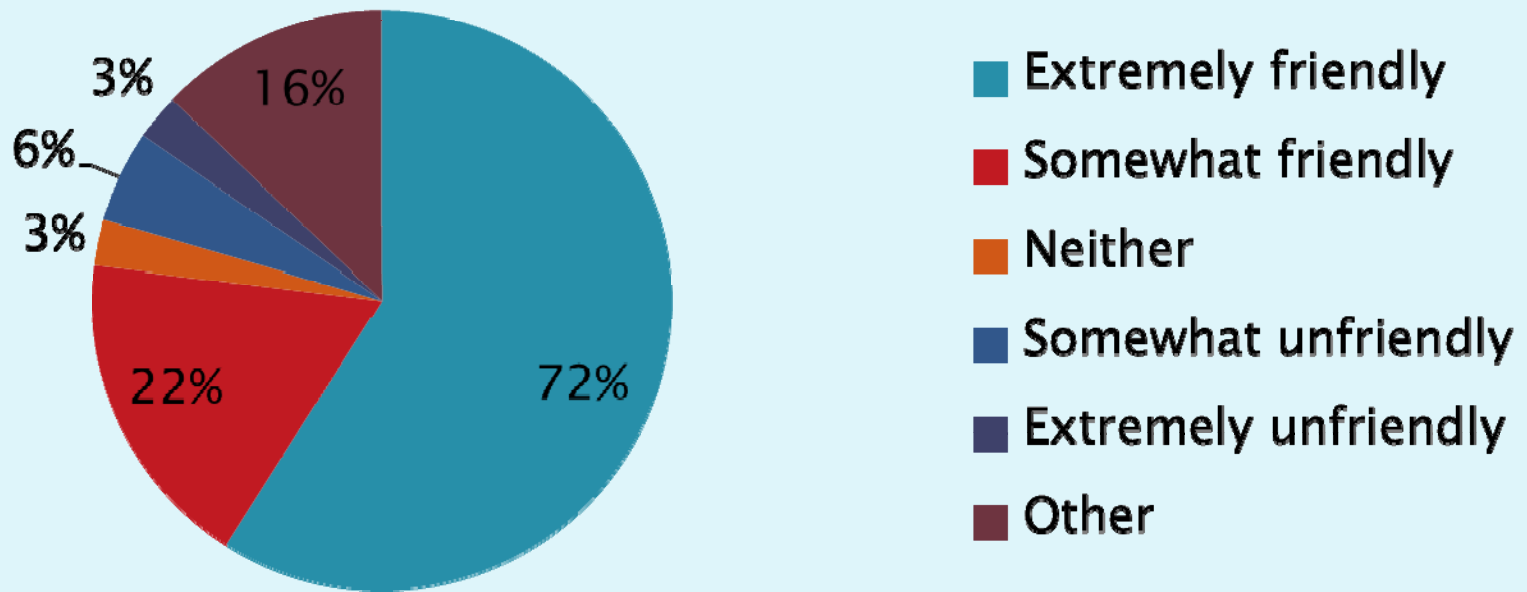
- 1st $n = 18$ (56%)
- 2nd $n = 9$ (28%)
- 3rd $n = 2$ (6%)
- 4th–6th $n = 3$ (9%)

▶ Type of birth

- Vaginal $n = 28$ (88%)
- Cesarean section $n = 4$ (13%)

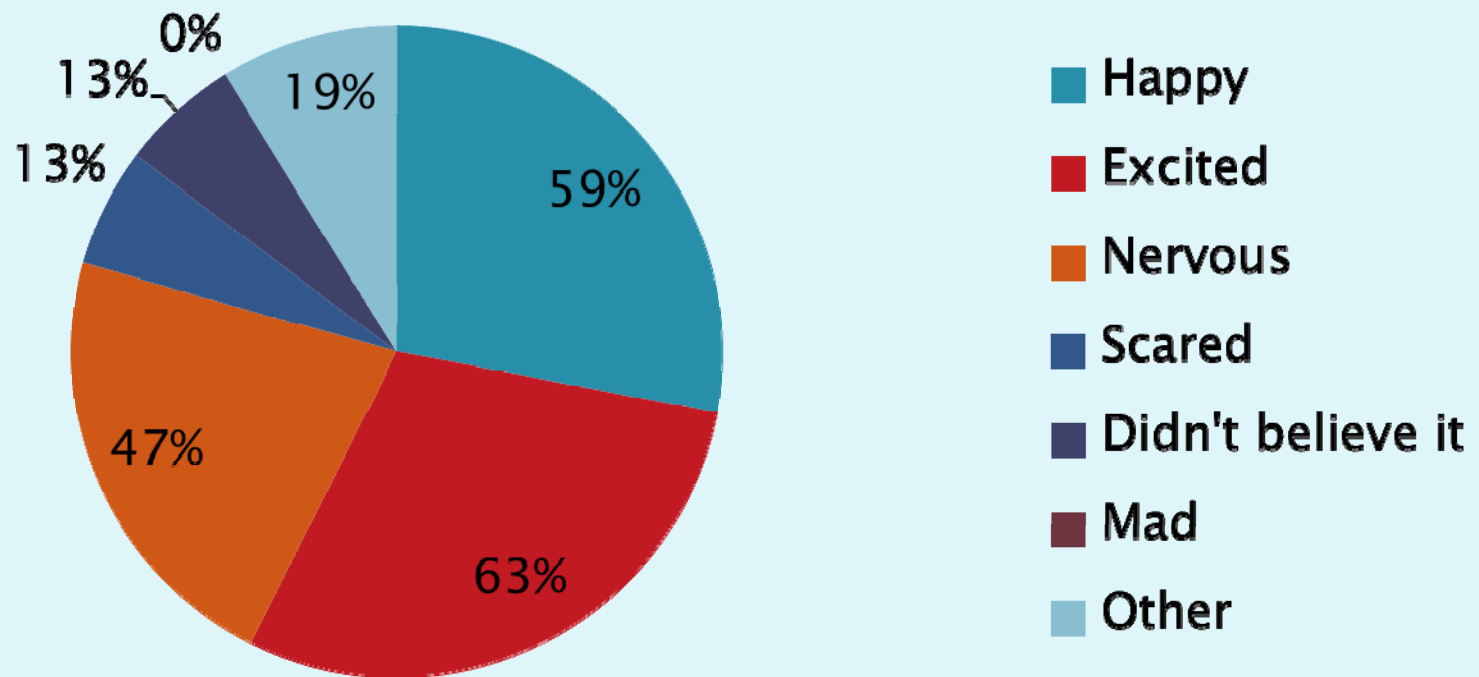
Results: Reported feelings

First impression of staff upon arrival to hospital



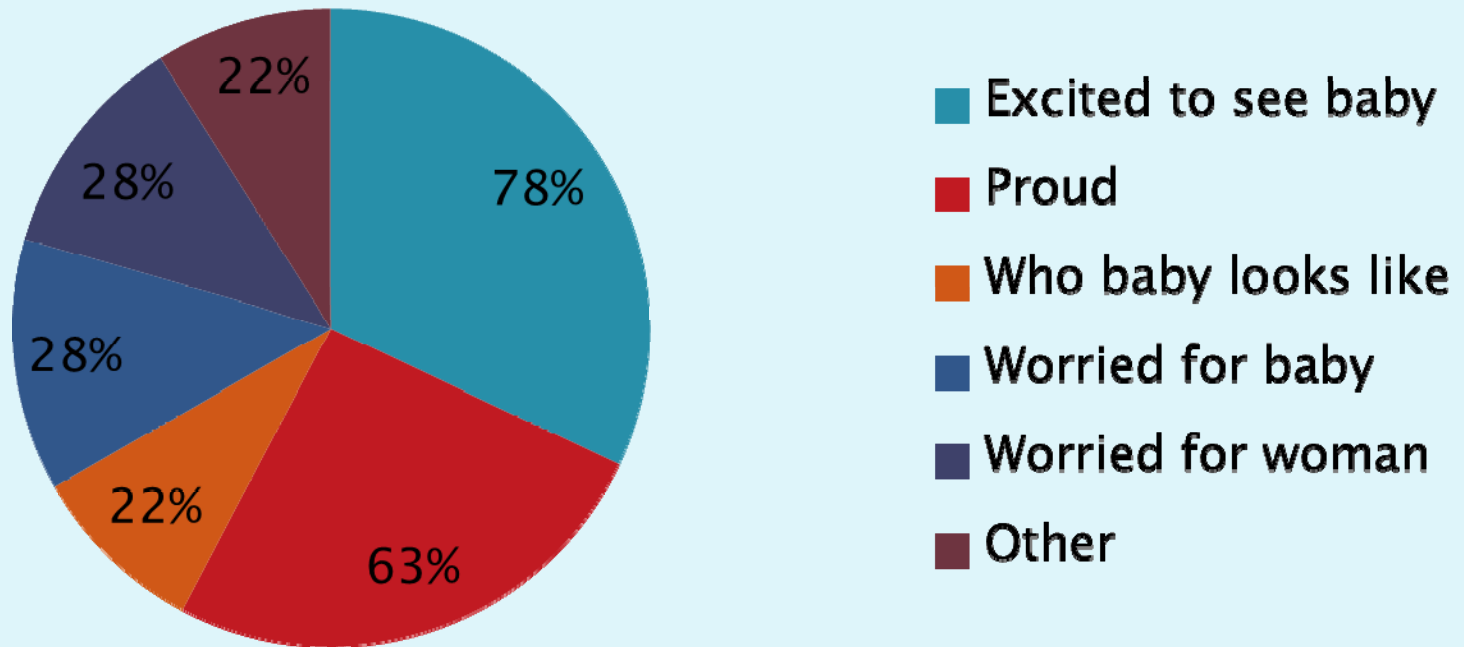
Results: Reported feelings

How he felt at start of labor



Results: Reported feelings

How he felt at the birth of baby



Results: Reported feelings

- ▶ Fear during labor?

- Yes $n = 13$ (41%)
- No $n = 19$ (59%)

- ▶ Fear for life of woman or baby?

- Yes $n = 13$ (41%)
- No $n = 19$ (59%)

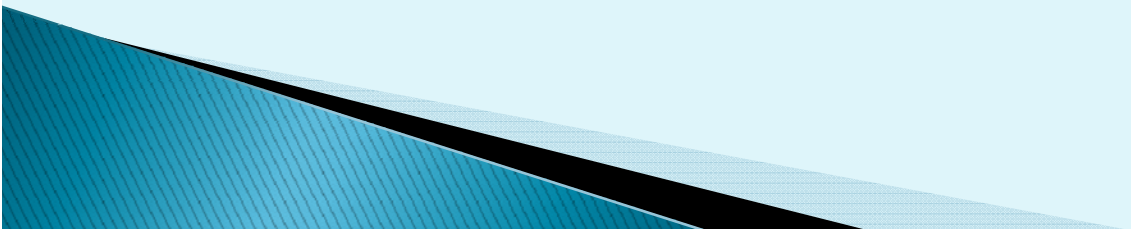
Results: Reported feelings

- ▶ Vaginal births report of fear
 - $n = 10$ (36%)
 - All who reported fear were having 1st & 2nd child
 - No fear with 3rd or > child
- ▶ Cesarean births report of fear
 - $n = 3$ (75%)
 - These three were having 1st & 2nd child
 - The one with no fear having 3rd child

Results: Feelings on midwifery care

- ▶ Was midwife competent
 - Yes $n = 31$ (97%)
 - No $n = 1$ (3%)
- ▶ Did midwife do a good job explaining what was going to happen in labor?
 - Yes $n = 31$ (97%)
 - No $n = 0$ (0%)
 - Other $n = 1$ (3%)
- ▶ Did midwife demonstrate ways to help comfort laboring woman?
 - Yes $n = 17$ (53%)
 - No $n = 15$ (47%)

Discussion

- ▶ Demographics similar to literature.
 - ▶ Experience emotions throughout childbirth, not passive.
 - ▶ Type of birth may relate to fear.
 - ▶ Number of previous children may relate to fear.
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Discussion

- ▶ Good satisfaction with midwifery care
- ▶ Want focus to remain on mom and baby, but want to be acknowledged

Limitations

- ▶ Small convenience sample
- ▶ Had to rely on midwives to hand it out and collect
- ▶ Survey not tested for validity
- ▶ Offered survey in only one type of labor and delivery setting
- ▶ Limited cultural variation, no questions with regards to educational or financial background

Recommendations: feelings of male partner

- ▶ First impressions set the tone
- ▶ Inclusion, as culturally appropriate
- ▶ Assess his previous experience with childbirth
- ▶ Acknowledge he may have multiple or conflicting feelings
- ▶ Discuss what is currently happening & what is expected to happen

Suggestions for future research

- ▶ Larger qualitative study
 - Does type of delivery impact feelings of fear?
 - Does birth order affect feelings of fear?
- ▶ Add questions regarding doula
- ▶ More diversity of participants needed
- ▶ Single male partners
 - Boyfriend
 - Father of the baby
- ▶ Offer survey in various settings

Thank you for listening

