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Support offered by midwives to women during labor in a public hospital, Limpopo province: A participant observation study**Sonto M Maputle**

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Background & Aim: Support during labor increase women's chances of having a positive childbirth experiences as well as childbirth outcomes. The purpose of this study was to determine the support offered by midwives to women during labor at the public hospital in Limpopo Province.

Setting: The setting of the study was a tertiary hospital in Limpopo province.

Methods: A qualitative, participant observation approach was used. Population consisted of all women that were admitted to deliver their babies and the midwives who are providing midwifery care in the obstetric unit of one public hospital in Limpopo province. Non-probability, purposive and convenience sampling were used to sample 12 women and 12 midwives. Data were collected through participant observations which included unstructured conversations with the use of observational guide, field notes of events and conversations that occurred when women interact with midwives were recorded verbatim and a visual analog scale to complement the observations. Data was analyzed qualitatively but were presented in the tables and bar graphs.

Results: Findings of the study reflected the perceived support by midwives for women during labor as five (5) themes, namely; communication between women and midwives, informational support, emotional support activities, physical comforting measures rendered and supportive care activities during labor.

Conclusions: The recommendations were contextualized within the creation of framework for delivery of public services to treat citizens more like customers and enable them to hold public servants to account for the services they render. The Batho Pele principles to be adapted when rendering care during labor; namely; consultation, service standard, courtesy, access, information, transparency, redress and value for money.

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