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Childbirth between culture, science and technology

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This report wants to put in evidence, the relationship between culture, science, technology, nature and childbirth. We know, from Anthropology, that there is no people in the world, where labor and childbirth take place as natural and physiological events. The biological events of labor and birth are everywhere remolded and conditioned by social factors and dominant cultural factors of which they are expression. Physiology is universal, however, we know how there are multiple modes of approaching universal physiological events. Birth is considered in every society as a reflection of total culture. It is the culture to explain diversity and not nature. We should not lose sight of the fact that today we live in a post-modern society where technologies have an impact on the individual greater than that produced by their meaning. Contemporary medical obstetrics considers the use of high technology as the first element to control and dominate nature from the unpredictability of pregnancy and childbirth. Medicine needs to control the risk. In this culture, childbirth is a medical event and it is not considered the fact that reproduction is not only a biological process, but a complex experience that involves spirituality, psychology, ethics, rationality and relational life as expression of woman's identity. Nature, culture and society are the three inseparable dimensions of human reproduction and childbirth, where it cannot be ignored the existential problematic of childbirth and human identity. This needs a reflection on the deepest meaning on maternity connected to women's conscience developed in their human biography, as a visible expression of a personal act in a synthesis of total and original intimacy. In the seventies, as reaction to the excess of technocratic medicine, that rigidly separates, in a Cartesian way, the body from the mind; it was felt the necessity to humanize the techno medicine. At present, we are in a situation that has contradictory aspects. We can see that it has been tried to humanize childbirth but, on the other hand, the use of medical technology for childbirth has been progressively increased, as evidenced by the increase, in low risk births, interventions in most Western countries, which have become such a routine to be considered more and more as part of births defined normal. In the scientific model of birth (or Physiological Model) it is believed that for healthy women with normal pregnancies, we must work to improve the quality of birth support by following the principles of science, by integrating the judicious use of the best scientific evidence available, with the precise scientific knowledge of anatomy and physiology, associated with the clinical experience of the operator. But besides this, there is the necessity to understand the patient's values, preferences and considerations and to respect the inseparable unit of the woman with her baby. Every birth needs assistance and support. It is therefore proposed to analyze new territorial and hospital based birth assistants that see two parallel pathways, the physiological one entrusted to midwives with a continuity of care and that of high risk pregnancy to doctors. Today it is a commitment to practice holistic care to pregnancy and birth. The birth support model that best understands a holistic approach is that of Anglo-Saxons with the term midwifery model of care and identifying in the midwife as the appropriate operator to this type of assistance.

Biography

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