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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Family relationships with pediatricians: the maternal views



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KEYWORDS

Pediatrician;
Child guidance;
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Abstract

Objective: To analyze the perception of pediatric guidelines by mothers at the time of consultation in private offices, in order to know how they assimilate, process and use the information received from the pediatricians.

Methods: Data collection was carried out by a questionnaire sent to participants by a total of 200 mothers from a virtual community in social networks participated in the research. The answers were transcribed using the Discourse of the Collective Subject method. The analyses were supported by the research qualitative perspective, from the viewpoint of the social representation theory.

Results: Three categories were obtained through data analysis: (1) assessing the pediatric guidelines, (2) confronting theory and practice and (3) developing a critical view of the pediatric guidelines. These categories have elucidated that the level of knowledge of pediatric issues by mothers and their ability to use them when making decisions about the care of their babies, have a direct association between following or not the pediatric guidelines.

Conclusions: The mother's decision on following the pediatrician's recommendations depends on two main factors: (a) certification of the updated and proven recommendations, according to the official health agencies; (b) support and recognition by the pediatrician of the maternal empowerment during the follow-up process. The mothers' practice of accessing knowledge through social networks hinders the pediatric monitoring.

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PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Pediatra;
Orientação da
criança;
Grupo de mulheres

As relações da família com os pediatras: as visões maternas

Resumo

Objetivo: Analisar a percepção das orientações pediátricas pelas mães na ocasião do atendimento em consultórios particulares, para conhecer de que maneira assimilam, processam e usam as informações recebidas de seu pediatra.

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Métodos: A coleta de dados foi feita por questionário enviado às participantes. Participaram da pesquisa 200 mães de uma comunidade virtual nas redes sociais. As respostas foram transcritas por meio do método do discurso do sujeito coletivo. As análises foram respaldadas na perspectiva qualitativa de pesquisa, sob a ótica da teoria das representações sociais.

Resultados: Obtiveram-se três categorias por meio da análise de dados: (1) avaliação das orientações pediátricas, (2) confronto da teoria e prática e (3) desenvolvimento de um olhar crítico acerca das orientações pediátricas. Tais categorias elucidaram que o nível de conhecimento de temas pediátricos por parte das mães e a sua capacidade de usá-los na tomada de decisões sobre os cuidados dos seus bebês apresentam uma relação direta entre seguir ou não as orientações pediátricas.

Conclusões: A decisão das mães quanto a seguir as recomendações do pediatra depende de dois fatores principais: (a) certificação das recomendações atualizadas e comprovadas, de acordo com os órgãos oficiais de saúde; (b) apoio e reconhecimento por parte do pediatra do papel materno durante o processo de acompanhamento. A prática do acesso ao conhecimento das mães por meio de redes sociais dificulta o acompanhamento pediátrico.

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Introduction

In our society, the pregnant woman is seen as a sick individual,¹ requiring frequent medical care from conception to delivery. The Western method of Medicine is still associated with detachment, impersonality, objectivity and the care provider's authority. This perspective directly influences the way this woman sees herself and in many cases affects her self-confidence and capacity to manage the maternal processes, including delivery, breastfeeding and care provided to the baby.²

The literature has been increasingly discussing the empowerment processes³ and their applicability to motherhood. Maternal empowerment can be understood as women's achievement toward strengthening their personal autonomy, which may occur individually or collectively, making them capable of self-managing their maternal dilemmas.⁴

Empowerment in the health area is seen by its professionals as a support tool in health self-control processes by patients. It has been shown that women who manage or are directly responsible for the care of their babies reach, as a result, a significant improvement in child health quality.⁵

The attainment of knowledge on baby care by the mother, based on her own maternal experiences and acquired knowledge, has a direct effect on her decision to follow or not the advice she receives from this professional.⁶ This decision is based on internalized suppositions from experiences and knowledge acquired by this mother during her own existence and experiences shared with other women, especially when she feels insecure about the recommendations she received from the pediatrician. In this sense, pediatricians who show appreciation for these maternal experiences and thus reaffirm the mother's personal beliefs will be more successful in their professional performance.

This study considers the maternal empowerment as any behavior that gives mothers a positive and informed control regarding their decisions on the care of their babies' health, which result in what might be called good pediatric practices. The objectives of the study include: to understand the meanings of discourses through maternal practices, to

associate the meaning assigned by them to such behavior and their perceptions of pediatric care in this interaction.

Therefore, given the scarcity of data on the impact of maternal empowerment in promoting and improving maternal and child health, we decided to assess the perceptions of mothers about pediatric care, studying in depth the factors that motivate this practice among mothers, as well as the support available on the internet.

Method

This is a descriptive exploratory study, which allowed us to interpret the discourses of the mothers participating in a virtual motherhood support group, regarding their perceptions of pediatric care and the consequent decisions regarding the health of their babies, characterizing the type of behavior that is defined as maternal empowerment (ME). The analyzed virtual community on Facebook has been active for five years as a support group that guide and share experiences daily with thousands of mothers through the Internet, relying on the voluntary participation of approximately 50,000 mothers living in several Brazilian cities. The community's goal is maternal empowerment in the virtual network.

The main reason that leads mothers to seek the community, in general, is experiencing some difficulty in the postpartum period, especially regarding breastfeeding. The community usually follows this mother in the daily dynamics of involvement and care of her baby and she participates in the support groups according to her needs, remains a member of these groups – monitors the daily publications and actively participates in community life – through debates, supporting other mothers and sharing personal experiences related to their maternal processes. The fruitfulness and variety of this virtual support network allows us to understand the dynamics of this relationship and its practical consequences in child care and thus, meet the goals of this research.

This study was approved by the Institutional Review Board of Faculdade de Ciências Médicas da Unicamp, under protocol number 793,995. All participants signed the Informed Consent form after reading and agreeing to the objective of

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