

NURSING RESEARCH REVIEW FORM

1st Review

REVIEWER #2

Manuscript # 2006/044
Manuscript title: The anniversary of birth trauma: Failure to rescue
Manuscript type: Regular
Number of text pgs.: 17
Number of figures: 0
Number of tables: 0
Reviewer: Holly Kennedy
Stat reviewer assigned?: No -- do you recommend a stat reviewer?

Please evaluate the following with these choices: (1) adequate, (2) inadequate (describe in written review) or (3) not appropriate (describe in written review)

Please rate the following topics 1-5 (with 5 being the highest rating):

Value of topic: 5
Probable reader interest in topic: 4
Importance of present contribution to nursing: 3.5
Priority of topic for publication: 3.5
Rank this manuscript for its value: 3.5

Reviewer's Recommendation (please type "X" after your choice):

Accept without revisions
Accept with revisions
Maybe accept with revisions X
Do not accept

Comments for Editor only:

Problem statement: 2
Attention to relevant literature: 1
Theoretical framework: NA
Research design: 2
Data analysis: 2
Discussion of results: 2
Organization: 1
Writing style: 1

This is an interesting and important study that portrays an event in this sample of women's lives that is probably missed by many clinicians. So many clinicians still believe that childbirth memories will fade, especially those of pain. This study starkly shows that this is likely not the case. Because it is such an invisible phenomenon I think there needs to be a stronger introduction to the problem, particularly in terms of implications for the long term effects of birth trauma for women and their families, especially children.

In general the review of literature is thorough in terms of what little is known about the subject of birth trauma. However, I think it needs a stronger synthesis and identification of the gap in knowledge and why it is important to understand this particular event (anniversary of the trauma) in women's lives. It would be considerable strengthened in this regard if the author could draw from the literature on PTSD from other events and the importance of triggers. For example, the sound of a backfire to a combat veteran can trigger a flashback and therefore it is conceivable that the "birthday" could also trigger the same type of thoughts for the woman who has PTSD resulting from birth trauma. I think it is assumed the reader will make these connections, but it would be stronger to be more grounded in the literature. There needs to be a better transition from the ROL to the methods section.

The actual description of the research method is adequate. There needs to be a greater description of the sample recruitment. It appears the only site for recruitment was the Internet and specifically a support site for birth trauma. This would certainly yield a purposive sample, but would exclude those women who do not use this resource – would they have something different to say. More information about the site would be helpful – particularly in numbers of "hits" to the posting about the study so the readers could get a sense of the potential interest in the study. This is potentially a limitation which is not addressed at all. There needs to be more discussion about methodological rigor.

The analysis is lacking demonstration of how the themes were actually identified – it would be helpful to see one example of how Colaizzi's method was applied to the data. I believe the presentation of the findings would be enhanced by a more general description of each of them at the beginning of the sections. Some of them have an opening of a one line description and some of them immediately begin with quotes. Page 13; lines 16-20 are very short paragraphs. If the general description of the theme was a bit more in depth the quotes could be used somewhat more sparingly.

There needs more depth in the discussion. In particular I think it would be helpful to make practical suggestions for providers about how to assess and document the risk for PTSD related to birth trauma and then how to follow up on it. How should clinicians assess for it – who should? Page 19, lines 17-20 is very powerful on how different birth experiences can be. Some of the women's descriptions of the difficulties with their feelings about their child are disturbing and should be addressed more thoughtfully in the discussion. This is particularly important since the evidence from other studies indicate that postpartum depression is correlated with infant temperament and attachment issues. Does the author believe there is any relationship to prenatal or postpartum depression, or birth expectations? These are important questions to consider for future studies to tease out the issues of birth trauma and to proactively identify women at risk and work with them. Additionally I am left wondering if these women are "different" from other women who had birth trauma but perhaps do not have the outlet or ability to talk about their experiences. Finally, there needs to be an acknowledgement of the limitations and the strengths of this study.