

# **Experiences of women with Peripartum cardiomyopathy: a qualitative study**

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**Introduction:** Peripartum cardiomyopathy (PPCM) is often associated with severe heart failure, typically occurring in late pregnancy or within months postpartum, presenting with debilitating symptoms that require patient-centered care. The aim of this study was to explore the experiences of women diagnosed with peripartum cardiomyopathy.

**Methods:** Qualitative interviews were conducted with 29 women diagnosed with peripartum cardiomyopathy in Iran, following informed consent. Data were analyzed using conventional qualitative content analysis.

**Results:** The central theme emerging from the experiences of women with cardiomyopathy was "intensified hardship," which was expressed through three subthemes: "lack of adequate care," "absence of companionship," and "feeling insecure." This suffering was related to the disease and symptoms of health impairment but was predominantly associated with the perceived lack of seriousness and insufficient care. Nurses and midwives in the maternity ward felt that, compared to midwives, they were less involved in providing specialized care to pregnant women. Additionally, their knowledge about peripartum cardiomyopathy was limited, and participants expressed distrust and dissatisfaction due to neglect and indifference in care provided by healthcare personnel and staff.

**Conclusion:** This study reveals a knowledge gap regarding peripartum cardiomyopathy among obstetric personnel. This issue can be highly concerning, as the dismissal of symptoms and misdiagnosis of peripartum cardiomyopathy may lead to life-threatening consequences for both the mother and the newborn. For timely and accurate diagnosis and to prevent patient suffering and hardship, it is crucial to seriously listen to and respect the concerns of women, thereby facilitating an experience of childbirth with minimal difficulty for this group of mothers.

**Keywords:** pregnant women, cardiomyopathy, peripartum, qualitative study

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