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# To cope or not to cope – are we meeting the needs of women experiencing pain during childbirth?

A critical review of qualitative research exploring women's experiences of coping with pain during childbirth

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## Methodology:

- Ten studies were identified from Australia, England, Finland, Iceland, Indonesia, Sweden and Iran
- Thematic analysis was employed for data synthesis
- Two main themes emerged which influenced women's ability to cope with pain during childbirth:

## 'The importance of individualised, continuous support'

- A desire for continued reassurance by care providers and family relations
- The need for the care provider to maintain a presence within the birth environment decreased feelings of vulnerability and loneliness
- The importance of a 'woman-orientated' versus a 'task orientated' approach to care provision

## 'An acceptance of pain during childbirth'

- Embracing the essential and beneficial role of pain during childbirth
- The influence of positive and negative thought processes upon the nature of pain and subsequent ability to cope
- Acknowledging the paradoxical nature of this major life event

## Conclusions and Implications for Practice

- The need for psychosocial as oppose to pharmacological support for all women, regardless of culture, ethnicity or maternity care system
- The recognition for effective antenatal education provision
- Acknowledging the impact of the media, the internet and social media is creating positive social norms relating to the role of pain during childbirth
- The need for further methodologically sound qualitative research exploring the phenomena of coping with pain during childbirth

For the full article, please see:

Van der Gucht, N. and Lewis, K. (2015) 'Women's experiences of coping with pain during childbirth: a critical review of qualitative research'. *Midwifery*. 31(3), pp. 349-358