Oral Communication

OC-484

Rehabilitation and Motherhood: A Challenging Public Health Issue

Topic: Specific Target Groups (Children, Women, Elderly, Athletes, Musicians, Refugees, Ethnic Groups, Workers, and Others)

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BACKGROUND

Pregnancy is one of the most beautiful periods in a woman's life, but "over a third of women experience lasting health problems after childbirth", affecting almost 50 million women globally every year (source: WHO). While it is common knowledge that low back pain represents a growing public health concern, affecting up to 80% of the world's population, it also disproportionately affects women, especially after childbirth. Moreover, pelvic floor dysfunction and C-section scarring represent unique female conditions, which, if addressed early, could reduce the physical, social and economic burden on the individual and public health sector. In this study, we aim to present the complete picture of women's postpartum health from a PM&R perspective, the impact these conditions currently have on mothers and to propose an evidence-based rehabilitation plan that could mitigate this under-addressed global health problem.

METHODS

We performed a thorough analysis of the literature published between 2015 and 2025 in databases such as PubMed, PubMedCentral, NCBI, and ScienceDirect. The search topics covered postpartum low back pain and postpartum, low back and pelvic floor rehabilitation. A total of 30 relevant studies were included.

RESULTS

Various factors influence the health of a new mother and the rehabilitation strategies employed, such as the mode of fetal delivery, number of births, age, nutritional status, pre-existing conditions, social support and socioeconomics. Although natural delivery is more commonly associated with pelvic floor issues, like urinary and faecal incontinence, pelvic organ prolapse and sexual dysfunctions, some of them tend to have a greater long-term impact on women who gave birth through C-section, a procedure that has seen a consistent rise in the past years. Additionally, C-section delivery can lead to scarring, fibrosis and a higher incidence of low back pain. If left unaddressed, a high proportion of these changes become chronic, causing a decreased quality of life and an elevated cost on society. The most effective rehabilitation strategy is multimodal, consisting of kinesiotherapy, physical-agents and technology-based treatments, together with medical interventions. Its aim is to address musculoskeletal and cardiovascular health, weight management, sleep improvement and psychological well-being, beyond the six-week traditional postpartum care.

CONCLUSION

Despite the vast evidence supporting the benefits of physical rehabilitation during and after childbirth, 50 to 80% of mothers do not engage in any type of therapy. Thus, we encourage the development of cohesive rehabilitation plans, public awareness campaigns and closer collaboration with our ObGyn colleagues to improve women's health.

Statement of Disclosures

None

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