

Maternal Nocturnal Caregiving to Infants and Parenting Satisfaction: A Qualitative Inquiry

B.M.K.S. Senadheera*, A.M.S.D. Pathiranage

*Department of Nursing, Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, University of Peradeniya,
Peradeniya, Sri Lanka
kaushis884@gmail.com

The postpartum period is challenging for new mothers, as they must provide continuous care for their newborns. Nocturnal caregiving responsibilities often lead to stress and fatigue. These demands can significantly affect parenting satisfaction and influence their overall perception of the early maternal experience. The research aims to explore maternal involvement, challenges and coping strategies related to nocturnal caregiving to infants and its influence on parenting satisfaction during the initial postpartum period among primiparous mothers. A qualitative phenomenological study was conducted in Gangawatakorale and Gangaihala MOH areas of the Kandy district among ten primiparous mothers within the first eight weeks of the postpartum period. Purposive sampling was employed, and individual, in-depth interviews were conducted using a pre-tested, interviewer-administered, semi-structured guideline. Data collection continued until saturation was reached; no new themes emerged after the 10th interview. Ethical approval was obtained, informed consent was secured, and confidentiality was strictly maintained. The data were analysed thematically using the Braun and Clarke method. A total of nine major themes and eighteen subthemes were identified. 1) Maternal nocturnal caregiving responsibilities are dynamic in nature and involve both infant centered caregiving activities and supportive roles toward their husbands, 2) Factors influencing maternal involvement is categorized into positive and negative factors, 3) Maternal perceptions of nocturnal caregiving included emotional experiences and maternal attitudes, 4) Nocturnal care giving has been shown to adversely affect physical and psychological wellbeing of mothers , 5) Balancing nocturnal caregiving with other life demands(strained social and family relationships, and daytime caregiving), 6) Adaptive self- management (practical strategies, emotional coping) 7) Collaborative strategies (support from spouse and extended family). 8) Fostering strong parent infant bond (attentiveness and responsiveness to infant needs, joy in observing baby's development), 9) Strengthening spousal bond (mutual appreciation and understanding, strengthened team work). For many, despite the physical and mental demands, nocturnal caregiving positively influences parenting satisfaction by fostering a strong bond with the infant and strengthening the spousal bond. It addresses a key gap in literature by offering culturally specific insights into postpartum care urging healthcare professionals to incorporate this understanding into antenatal and postnatal period education programs.

Keywords: Maternal, postpartum, nocturnal caregiving, parenting satisfaction