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In-Depth Semi-Structured Interview Field Guide After Unscheduled Cesarean Births

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Disclaimer

The authors have no conflicts of interest.

Abstract

This protocol describes how the research team employed the After-Action Review method in semi-structured interviews with patients who recently underwent unanticipated cesarean deliveries.

Patients who underwent unscheduled cesarean delivery were approached on post-operative day one, two, or three by their care team rather than the research team. Written informed consent was obtained by the study team from interested participants. Consenting participants were interviewed while still admitted to the hospital, were subsequently contacted three months postpartum by phone, and finally were administered an anonymous online survey.

Interviewers were trained in the After-Action Review technique and were proctored prior to completing study conversations. All patients were interviewed with the same script, including the basic four questions of the AAR technique: a) What did you expect your birth to be like? b) What actually happened? c) What went well and why? and d) What can we improve and how? Additionally, all patients were asked what they would recommend offering to patients after their birth and what they would have found helpful. Prompts were used after each of these questions to facilitate a deeper understanding about the influences of various sources of information on their expectations, and of different healthcare team actors on their experiences.

In-Depth Semi-Structured Interview Field Guide – Immediate Postpartum

1 **INTRODUCTION:**

1.1 **Ground Rules for the Session:**

There are no right or wrong answers to any of the questions I will ask you today, and none of your answers will be shared with your healthcare providers. This is a confidential conversation. As we discussed earlier in the informed consent form, I would like to tape record this session to make sure I do not miss any important information by taking notes only. Your name will not be used during the transcription process in order to protect your confidentiality. After the recording has been transcribed, the digital voice file will be destroyed. If you agree to be recorded, please talk as clearly and as loudly as I am speaking. Do you have any questions? [answer questions]

1.2 **Role of the Interviewer:**

My role in this interview is to ask questions. I am here to listen and not to solve problems, but I will gather information from you and distribute it to those who can solve these issues. I will not be participating in the conversation much, but I will be guiding it by asking questions and moving the discussion from one topic to another. Please feel free to stop me at any time. Also, you do not need to answer any questions which you do not wish to answer for any reason. Do you have any final questions before we start? [answer questions] Are you ready to begin?

2 **INTERVIEW:**

2.1 **Perceptions of postpartum period:**

How are you feeling? How is your recovery going so far?

2.2 **After action review:**

First, I would like to ask -- **What did you expect your birth experience to be like?**

- Where do you get information about birth?
- What did other people tell you to expect? What had you heard from family and friends? What had you heard from your pregnancy care providers?

Now, I'd like to shift gears to talk about your experience specifically. **What actually happened?**

- Why do you think x happened? Can you tell me some more about why you think that?
- Do you think x impacted y; how so?

Thank you for sharing that. During your birth, **what went well?**



- What worked well for you?

We are an organization that always wants to improve. **What could have gone better during your birth?**

- Would it have been helpful if __ happened earlier?
- If you could offer something to help patients after their birth, what would it be? What would be helpful?
- As researchers studying patients' experiences during childbirth, what would you want us to know?

3 **CLOSING:**

- 3.1 Thank you for spending time with me today. Do you have anything to add?
You will receive an email with a link to a survey form in case you have anything else to add or if you have any questions. As we discussed when signing the consent form, we will be contacting you in a few months by phone to ask if you have anything else to add after reflecting on your experience. Do you have any questions?
[TURN OFF AUDIO RECORDER]

In-Depth Semi-Structured Interview Field Guide - Postpartum

4 **INTRODUCTION:**

- 4.1 We spoke while you were in the hospital. As a reminder, this is a confidential conversation. I would like to tape record this session to make sure I do not miss any important information by taking notes only. Your name will not be used during the transcription process in order to protect your confidentiality. After the recording has been transcribed, the digital voice file will be destroyed. Do you have any questions? [answer questions]
Are you ready to begin?

Post-Study Qualtrics Survey

- 5 Did the postpartum interview benefit you?
What was it about the interview that was helpful or meaningful?
What didn't you like?
Anything else would you like to add?
- 6 If you have any questions, you may contact the study team by emailing xx or by contacting the Human Subject Protection Advocate of the IRB office at 1-866-xxx-xxx.

