Letter from the Editor

The Power of Perceptions of Childbearing

Abstract

Documenting women's perceptions of childbearing experiences can help other pregnant women with their own birth decisions.

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The majority of the research articles in this issue of *The Journal of Perinatal Education* (JPE) focus on the perceptions of childbearing women. Topics range from the perception of positive experiences from women having unmedicated birth to the perception of support during labor by adolescents and of transitions to early parenthood.

I am pleased to publish articles that focus on the perceptions of childbearing women. In general, maternity literature has a plethora of articles focusing on data related to biological maternity/newborn outcomes. Such articles are important because it is critical for health professionals to know which interventions do or do not lead to safe outcomes for both mother and child. Certainly, expectant parents also want to know facts about safe outcomes from interventions.

The literature is scarcer in documenting the perceptions of women and their childbearing experiences. Documenting perceptions is important because a woman's impression of childbearing will strongly influence her decisions. The written words of other mothers will carry considerable weight with some pregnant women—perhaps, in some cases, more weight than the words of the educator. Childbirth educators can collect articles that portray childbearing perceptions of women choosing normal birth and make them available to class members.

This is JPE's final issue of Volume 13. The Lamaze Board of Directors has studied the journal and directed that, with Volume 14, JPE be relaunched with a new cover and some new features. The journal's new name will be *The Journal of Perinatal Education: Advancing Normal Birth*. Among the new features will be an increase in short write-ups of birthing stories. The individual birthing stories of future issues will illustrate the perspective of birthing women. They will illustrate the perspectives of women who chose normal birth. If childbirth educators provide these articles to their class members, they may broaden the perspective of the women in their class and help them more clearly comprehend the choices available to them. After all, it was the birthing story told in 1959 by Marjorie Karmel in *Thank You, Dr. Lamaze* that launched Lamaze International and its mission to advance normal birth. Perceptions can be very powerful in the goal to advance normal birth.

—Sharron S. Humenick, RN, PhD, LCCE, FAAN