



IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA PARENTING FORUMS ON NEWBORN CARE PRACTICES: A ONE-PAGE REVIEW

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KEYWORDS :

INTRODUCTION

The widespread use of social media has transformed how new parents seek information, support, and reassurance. Parenting forums on platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp groups, Instagram communities, and online discussion boards provide instant access to advice from other parents. While these platforms offer emotional support and shared experiences, they also raise concerns about the accuracy and safety of health information. This review examines how social media parenting forums influence newborn care practices and highlights implications for child health nursing.

Benefits of Social Media Parenting Forums:

Parenting forums offer a sense of community during the vulnerable postpartum period. Many parents—especially in nuclear family settings—find support through shared stories, tips on feeding, burping, sleep routines, and navigation of common newborn issues. Forums serve as convenient spaces for parents to ask questions anonymously and receive real-time responses. They can also reduce feelings of isolation, build confidence, and assist with normalising newborn behaviours that might otherwise cause anxiety.

Risks and Misinformation

Despite their supportive nature, social media forums often lack professional moderation. Advice is typically anecdotal, unverified, and influenced by personal beliefs or cultural biases. Misinformation spreads easily—examples include unsafe feeding practices, early introduction of solids, herbal remedies for jaundice, or incorrect guidance on sleep positions. Conflicting advice can overwhelm parents, leading to confusion, anxiety, and inconsistent newborn care. Alarmist posts, personal testimonies, and sensational stories may also exaggerate concerns, contributing to unnecessary fear or cyberchondria.

Influence on Decision-Making

Parents often compare their newborn's behaviour to peer experiences online, which may shift their perception of what is "normal." This comparison may alter decisions related to breastfeeding, sleep routines, vaccination, and healthcare-seeking behaviour. Some parents adopt practices recommended online without consulting healthcare professionals, while others may delay necessary care due to reassurance from other parents. Conversely, negative or fear-based posts may prompt unnecessary emergency visits.

Impact on Nurse-Parent Relationship

Frequent exposure to online advice can create conflict between professional recommendations and peer opinions. Parents may challenge or question evidence-based guidance from nurses if it contradicts what they have read online. This can lead to reduced trust, fragmented care practices, and difficulty in establishing consistent newborn care routines. Nurses may also encounter heightened anxiety from parents who have been exposed to alarming online narratives.

Implications for Child Health Nursing

Child health nurses play a crucial role in guiding parents through the digital information environment. Nurses should acknowledge parents' use of social media rather than dismissing it and encourage open conversations about information found online. Providing credible digital resources, promoting digital health literacy, and clarifying common myths can help parents navigate social media safely. Incorporating anticipatory guidance during discharge and follow-up visits can significantly reduce reliance on unmoderated forums. Nurses can also advocate for the creation of professionally moderated parenting groups to ensure safe and evidence-based discussions.

CONCLUSION

Social media parenting forums significantly influence newborn care practices by providing support, connection, and shared experiences. However, the presence of misinformation and conflicting advice poses risks to infant safety and parental confidence. Supporting parents through clear guidance, trustworthy information, and respectful communication is essential. Child health nurses are well positioned to empower parents to use social media responsibly and make informed decisions that promote safe and healthy newborn care.

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