



Key influences on women’s decision for vaginal birth following a previous caesarean section: A qualitative study



Marcella Gavin, Mayo University Hospital, Ireland,
Magdalena Ohaja and Linda Biesty, University of Galway, Ireland

Introduction

Repeat caesarean section (CS) contributes to the rising CS rate, while vaginal birth after caesarean section (VBAC) for eligible women increases normality in childbirth. Support from healthcare providers have an impact on women’s choice of mode of birth after previous CS.

AIM

This study explores the factors that influence women’s decision-making for VBAC after previous CS.

Methods

The study used a qualitative design.

Ten women participated in an individual audio-recorded semi-structured interview via Zoom between March to September 2023.

Data was analysed using thematic analysis.

Ethical approval was obtained from the study site and the participants gave informed written and/or verbal consent prior to the interview.

Findings

Theme 1: Self-Determination

“... I was determined” ‘...I was.....so like strong minded’ (P4) ‘I was just so adamant’ (P7)

‘I was going to take control of the experience myself’ (P2) ‘..I knew all my options..’(P9) ‘ I learned by reading books..’
‘I felt it was my decision.’

Theme 2: Self-confidence

‘I knew that’s what I wanted to do...’
‘ I felt confident in my decision..’
‘...first and foremost would be my internal drive...knowing I was able to do it..’

‘..she reinforced a sense of me feeling that I could do it..’
‘ ..I was confident in like the care I was getting ...’(P9)

Key Message

In order for women to be in control of their decisions for mode of birth after previous CS they need adequate information, supportive empowering care providers

Midwives are agents of sustainable care

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Discussion

Support from care providers positive or negative was instrumental for the women’s aspiration to achieve vaginal birth (Keedle *et al.* 2018).

The participants who resisted the proposal for a repeat CS were able to do so because of the support from the midwife.

Therefore the partnership approach, and the advocacy role of the midwife inspires confidence for women (Davis *et al.* 2020; Lennon *et al.* 2023).

Conclusion

The study highlights the multi influencing factors around women’s decision-making for choice of VBAC following previous CS.

Evidence-based information and enabling environment for women to make informed decision is highlighted.

Positive attitude about VBAC is required from healthcare professionals.

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Selected references:

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