BOOK REVIEW

The Psychological Context of Labour Pain
Editors: Jaroslava Raudenska, and Alena Javůrková (2nd Faculty of Medicine, Charles University and Department of Clinical Psychology, Motol University Hospital, Prague, Czech Republic, and others)

The book written by Jaroslava Raudenská and Alena Javůrková is a clear example of how to fulfill a gap existing in the literature, in a way simple and understandable for everybody. It makes clear, starting from the origin of the “psychoprophilaxis” methods, the different stages through which the delivery has been transformed from a natural, tribal and primordial event (similar to any of the mammals species), to a human experience, in which the sentimental, social, educational and cultural experiences play a pivotal role. If we carefully look at this specific aspect of the humanity history, it summarise the evolutions of the humankind.

Someone was used to say the humankind has evolved much more from the second part of the '50s on, than in all its previous story. This also applies to the approach to labour and delivery. Also this is the main reason why there has been such a tremendous reduction in the perinatal mortality, in the last 6 decades. The two Authors have been excellent in focusing not only the evolution of the approach to delivery, but also the pro- and cons- of the different proposals that have came out to reduce pain, fear, fear of pain, and any other stressors surrounding the idea of delivering a baby.

Their psychological approach is extremely well treated, but they do not forget also to focus on all the other aspects, important for the wellbeing of the women and their children. The main message, at least from the first chapters, is clear. Women must experience one of the most important moment of their personal history in the best possible way. This is the main possibility to give them a positive background for their relationship with their children, especially in a chaotic society, that is loosing more and more values of the past, frequently not replaced by new values.

One of those values is the joy to experiment a vaginal, natural delivery that has been replaced, especially in some countries, by the increasing desire to have a caesarean delivery, not always justified by a real necessity. To this topic the Authors have dedicated a lot of energies, focusing not only on the social causes for such a mistaking attitude, but also with a clear analysis of how to escape from such a trap. The hedonistic aspects of the topic is well focused, and clearly directed toward a deep thought on how this can negatively influence the relationship with the concept of maternity.

In my opinion, the book of Jaroslava Raudenská and Alena Javůrková is a precious tool for any of the professionals involved with childbearing in the health care systems. I wish them all the success they deserve.

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