

## CONCEPT ANALYSIS

# Paternal Care during Miscarriage: A Concept Analysis

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## Abstract

Caring is the fundamental essence of nursing practice. Swanson's theory of caring provides the process of care for women who have experienced miscarriage. However, there is a gap in theory and knowledge in providing care to fathers experiencing a miscarriage. Studies have shown that the experience of fathers during a miscarriage is different from their wives. According to Jones et al (2019), fathers' experience during a neonatal loss is different from their partners. They feel isolated. Thus, men feel that they are disconnected from their partners, and also are not involved in the caring process, are overwhelmed by the situation, fathers feel that the role fathers play as a protector for their partner was not done well and they experience a lack of support from healthcare providers during that period. This concept of paternal care during a miscarriage is to help fathers who are experiencing neonatal loss by applying the appropriate nursing action to provide the necessary nursing care. The concept analysis methodology from Walker and Avant (2005) would define the concept, attributes, antecedents, consequences, cases, and empirical referent on paternal care during a miscarriage. This paper concludes that providing paternal care to fathers during miscarriage helps them deal with the loss and understand the process they are going through. Therefore, there is a need to develop a theory that provides the care process to fathers going through a miscarriage. Hence, the theory of paternal care during a miscarriage is proposed.

**Keywords:** *paternal care, miscarriage, caring, child loss*

## Introduction

Caring is the fundamental essence of nursing practice. To understand the meaning of care, we must first determine the meaning of caring. Oxford dictionary described caring as the function or practice of caring for those who cannot care for themselves, mainly because of age or sickness, and displaying compassion and concern for others (Oxford Advanced American Dictionary, 2020). Nursing researcher Jean Watson defines caring as a science. Caring is a philosophy that incorporates compassionate orientation, human science orientation, caring mechanisms for human beings, events, and interactions (Watson & Foster, 2003). In addition, caring has been described as a transpersonal mechanism, and a caring way to respond to a loved other than to whom one feels a personal sense of duty and dedication (Swanson, 1999).

To further understand the concept of care, Boykin and Schoenhofer (2012), caring is an altruistic, positive manifestation of affection, intentional, and tangible appreciation of the importance and remedially. The nursing profession aims to know the individuals and nurture them as persons who live and grow in care (Boykin & Schoenhofer, 2012). From the view of Roach (2012), care is the most common, genuine human criterion. Care

is not exceptional in nursing because caring is at the core of all the characteristics used to characterize nursing. To better the caring, Lillykutty and Samson (2018) postulate that caring is a feeling and an act of concern and empathy for others, and displaying or sympathizing for others. Caring is a feeling that also requires action.

According to Tavares Da Silva et al. (2016), stillbirth is the death of a fetus, which occurs 20 weeks of gestation or later during pregnancy. Stillbirth is a significant life-altering event that may have profound and enduring adverse emotional and psychological health consequences for mothers and families and their care providers (Cacciatore, 2013). Most stillbirth research deals with it in tandem with other types of perinatal loss, including miscarriage and neonatal loss; however, the experience of stillbirth may involve nuances that distinguish it from other types of loss (Nurse-Clarke et al., 2019). According to the Oxford Dictionary, paternal means of or appropriate to a father. (Oxford dictionary, 2020).

Studies have shown that the experience of fathers during a miscarriage is different from their wives. According to Jones et al.

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(2019), fathers' experience during a neonatal loss is different from their partners. They experience intense and enduring psychological outcomes than women but were more likely to engage in avoidance and coping behaviors such as increased alcohol consumption. In addition, they feel isolated. Thus, men feel that they are disconnected from their partners and are not involved in the caring process. They are overwhelmed by the situation. Fathers feel that their roles as protectors of their partners were not done well. Likewise, they experience a lack of support from healthcare providers during that period.

Wagner et al. (2018) explored the lived experiences of fathers during a miscarriage. As fathers' perceptions of person status identified pregnancy as an actual child, their emotional reaction was always heightened, and the absence could be understood and grieved. Moreover, those who did not understand their sorrow at a child's death contributed to disenfranchisement as fathers feel neglected and left out of the loop. Their disenfranchisement was intensified by medical workers, relatives, friends, fathers' opinions on their supportive position, and the need to be reliable. Silent support appeared to rob them of their own experiences (Wagner et al., 2018).

This concept of paternal care during a miscarriage is to help fathers who are experiencing neonatal loss by applying the appropriate nursing action to provide the necessary nursing care. The concept analysis methodology from Walker and Avant (2005) would define the concept, attributes, antecedents, consequences, cases, and empirical referent on paternal care during a miscarriage.

### Concept Definition

Having identified different definitions of caring from literature and scholars in the nursing profession, the concept of paternal care during miscarriage can be expanded and defined as delivering a set of interrelated processes of nurturing that evolve from the nurses' actions to a father experiencing neonatal loss.

### Related Concepts

Similar definitions are words similar to paternal care but with subtle distinctions that are carefully studied. Based on the literature review, the most widely-listed related terms for paternal care are the provision of family-centered care, provision of family care, and care for the parents align with providing care to the entire family unit.

According to Johnson and Abraham (2012), family-centered care can be described as an approach to health care planning, where implementation and appraisal focused on mutually beneficial relationships between health care providers, patients, and families. Family-centered care has the function of fostering patient's and family's well-being through holistic health care and retaining influence.

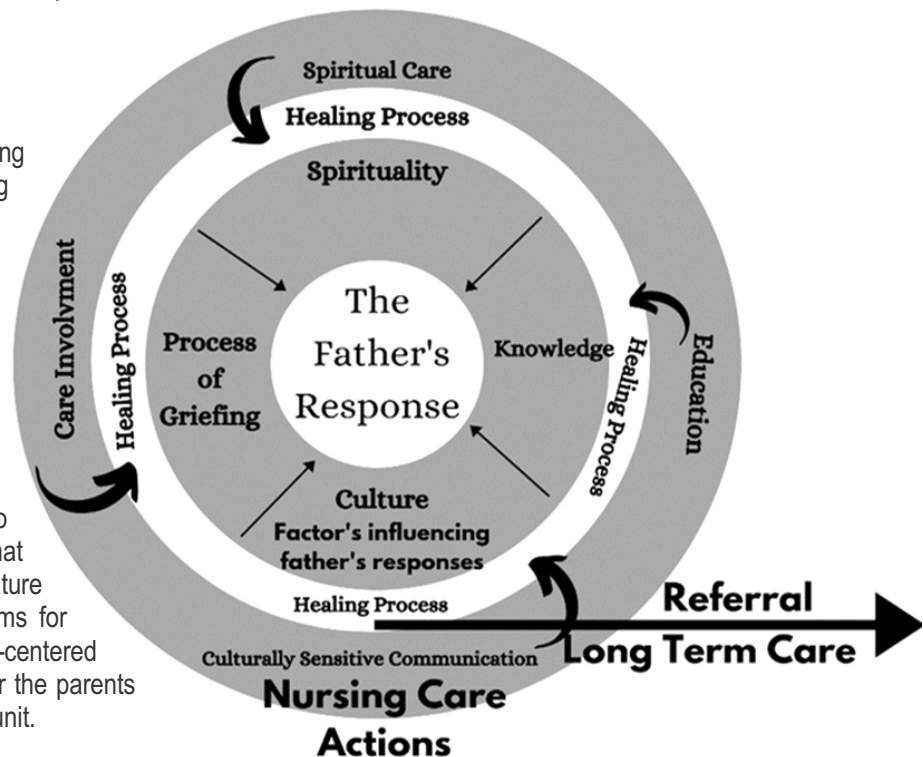
Family Care is a long-term Medicaid care program for elderly adults and individuals with physical, emotional, or behavioral impairments. People in the program, where possible, provide long-term care services to help them live in their own homes (Schols et al., 2018).

Parental care is a type of altruism since such behavior includes increasing the offspring's fitness at the parents' expense. Parental care can be characterized as any non-genetic input from a parent that improves offspring's fitness, which may occur before or after laying or birth (Stahlschmidt et al., 2011)

### Defining Attributes

The concept of paternal care during miscarriage incorporates attributes. The response of a father towards a miscarriage can be positive or negative. However, the father's response towards a miscarriage is influenced by cultural background, knowledge about miscarriage, the stage within the grieving process, and

Figure 1: Paternal Care During Miscarriage Model



spirituality. The nursing care actions are interventions to help the father in the healing process. This process includes culturally sensitive communication, education, spiritual care, and care involvement. The healing process is the process that the father will go through when dealing with the loss. Proper use of the nurse's care action will help the father cope with the loss and adopt appropriate coping mechanisms given the dynamics of grieving, which can take several months or years to overcome the loss. After the immediate nursing care actions, the nurse assessment would determine whether the father would be referred to counselors or psychologists to provide long-term care.

### Antecedents

The occurrence of a miscarriage is an antecedent in this concept. The second antecedent is the involvement of a father in the miscarriage. The care given to a relative would be different from that of a father.

### Consequences

During a miscarriage, paternal care helps provide holistic care to the father being impacted by the miscarriage. It allows the father to be cared for as the care provider would be family-centered. Secondly, the nurse can derive the process of the care of fathers during a miscarriage. Often, fathers are overlooked in the care; hence, nurses would meet the fathers' needs holistically.

### Model Case

A model case represents all the attributes of paternal care during a miscarriage. Mr. and Mrs. Enoch were admitted to the obstetrics ward after experiencing a miscarriage. Upon admission, the nurse observed the father pacing up and down the hallway. With concern, Nurse Amporte approached the father and led him to the private consultation room. Nurse Amporte provided privacy as she communicated with the father and listened to his concerns. Through this, Nurse Amporte began to understand the father's feelings of hopelessness and inability to help in the situation. He could not see what has happened as they have been trying to have a baby for years.

Additionally, Mr. Enoch expressed that a man should not be seen as weak; hence, he should be able to go through the process and be strong for his wife. Nurse Amporte began to educate the father on miscarriage, removing the misconception that it is the parents' fault. Through this education, Mr. Enoch understood the miscarriage and what his wife is going through. In the medical and nursing care of the wife, the nurse involved Mr. Enoch by informing him of the procedures and educating him about the care and what he can do to be involved in the care. In care, the father discussed his spiritual concerns and requested a pastor to pray

for them. Nurse Amporte would accommodate the family's spiritual practices and time for prayer by clustering her activities and supporting further requests. Before being discharged, Mr. Enoch expressed anger, wherein that God is not answering their prayers of having a baby. He expressed to Nurse Amporte that all of his friends have started a family and are left behind. Nurse Amporte was able to assess that Mr. Enoch was still in the process of grief and, despite being discharged, might need further counseling. Hence, Nurse Amporte referred Mr. and Mrs. Enoch to further counseling with a certified counselor upon discharge.

### Analysis

In this case, the attributes of the theory were reflected. Mr. Enoch's culture, knowledge, the process of grief, and spirituality affected his response towards the miscarriage. His response was negative due to the feelings of hopelessness. Nurse Amporte demonstrated the process of paternal care through culturally sensitive communication and education to increase the father's knowledge about miscarriage. Culturally appropriate services, or providing care that considers an individual's preferences and objectives as well as the cultures of their communities, are an important part of providing high-quality care (Chaturvedi & Raven, 2015).

Additionally, Nurse Amporte involved Mr. Enoch in the care so as not to feel that he cannot help. Nurse Amy provided spiritual care by listening to Mr. Enoch's spiritual concerns and accommodating their spiritual practices. Spirituality plays an essential role in the way an individual responds to a loss. Religion and spirituality help people in sub-Saharan African countries find meaning in life and understand the importance of living. In addition, religion helps people interact with their own cultures and the supreme being or God (Arrey et al., 2016). Regardless of the type, religious beliefs and practices help fathers who have experienced a loss of pregnancy to cope better with the devastating loss consequences and an adjustment to their loss (Allahdadian et al., 2015). Lastly, Nurse Amporte's assessment of the father showed that he is gradually moving through the grieving process, and to provide long-term care, referred the family to a counselor.

### Borderline Case

Borderline case contains most but not all of the attributes. Mr. and Mrs. Davis were admitted to the obstetrics ward after experiencing a miscarriage. Nurse Daniel was the nurse to take care of this family. Upon assessment, Nurse Daniel saw that Mr. Davis was quiet and distant. Nurse Daniel provided privacy in the consultation room and began to communicate with the father. The father expressed being worried about the health of

the wife and confusion about why a miscarriage occurred. Mr. Davis expressed that in his culture, miscarriage is seen as a disgrace to the family. Nurse Daniel took the opportunity to educate Mr. Davis on miscarriage to help remove the misconceptions. Nurse Daniel remained culturally sensitive towards Mr. Davis's culture. The next day, Mr. Davis did not come to the hospital. He refused to witness what his wife was going through and decided to stay at home.

### Analysis

In this case, specific attributes for paternal care during a miscarriage were demonstrated. This included culturally sensitive communication and education by the nurse. However, due to Mr. Davis' failure to come back to the hospital, spiritual care and care involvement was not demonstrated. Additionally, Nurse Daniel was unable to assess and refer the family to long-term care. Emond et al. (2019) emphasized the concept of families' involvement in the loss and grieving process. Upon miscarriage, family-centered nursing care is critical, as the loss affects the entire family unit. In times of distress, it is crucial that the family unit bonds and embraces each other to promote the process of coping. However, O'Leary (2003) posited that Unresolved grief increases the probability of experiencing more emotional and mental problems.

### Contrary Case

A contrary case does not provide any of the attributes. Mr. and Mrs. Marfo were admitted to the obstetrics ward after experiencing a miscarriage. Nurse Kusi was the nurse to take care of this family. Nurse Kusi focused on the care of the wife as she was crying and was in pain. On the other hand, Mr. Marfo was quiet and provided as much support to his wife. From the reaction of Mr. Marfo, Nurse Kusi assumed that the father was able to go through the grieving process. Hence, she prioritized her care towards Mrs. Marfo, who was in emotional distress.

### Analysis

In this case, the attributes of paternal care during miscarriage were not demonstrated. It can be observed that, due to Mr. Marfo not physically showing signs of grief, Nurse Kusi assumed that Mr. Marfo was not affected by the miscarriage. According to Enoch et al. (2019), a father's experience during a neonatal loss is different from his partner. Researchers have assumed that societal conceptions of masculinity have a substantial effect on the reaction of fathers to miscarriages (Dellicour et al., 2013; Chaffey & Whyte, 2014). Therefore, Nurse Kusi focused on Mrs. Marfo, which she assumed was only impacted by the miscarriage. The nurse should not assume that the men do not show any grief during neonatal loss, but Nurse Kusi should render the appropriate nursing care to alleviate the suffering of Mr. Marfo.

### Empirical referents

The empirical referent assists in demonstrating the occurrence of a concept. There is the Caring Assessment of Caregiver, Caring Behaviors Inventory, The Caring Professional Scale, and Caring Behaviour Assessment tool in the concept of caring. However, research should be developed to create a tool for paternal care during a miscarriage.

Swanson's theory of caring provides the process of care for women who have experienced miscarriage. However, there is a gap in theory and knowledge in providing care to fathers experiencing miscarriages. This paper concludes that providing paternal care to fathers during a miscarriage helps them deal with the loss and understand the process they are going through. Therefore, there is a need to develop a theory that provides the care process to fathers going through a miscarriage. Hence, the theory of paternal care during a miscarriage is proposed.

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*Always hold a beginner's mind; listen with a third ear (and eye and all other senses); one without any noise, to hear the experience of the one who has experienced some phenomenon, the one who happens to be the real expert.*

- Munhall, 2012