

**Integrative Nursing Science in Women's Pre-conceptual Wellness****Hanan Elzeblawy Hassan ****Maternal and Newborn Health Nursing, Faculty of Nursing, Beni-Suef University, Egypt*

ABSTRACT

Women's health care has separated childbearing from health promotion and management of chronic health. A critical dimension of an integrative nursing of women's health is bringing together childbearing with women's health during the life span. This integration is needed in areas such as preconception care. When Women's Health Care is viewed as an integrated continuum approach to health, rather than as a series of episodic events, higher levels of women's wellness will be achieved. An integrative science enhances research promoting women's health and patterns of care aimed at disease prevention. This article represents nursing Science in Women's Pre-conceptual Wellness.

Key words: Wellness, nursing, health.

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Introduction

Long time ago, women's health care has separated childbearing from health promotion and management of chronic health. A critical dimension of an integrative nursing of women's health is bringing together childbearing with women's health during the life span. This integration is needed in areas such as preconception care. When Women's Health Care is viewed as an integrated continuum approach to health, rather than as a series of episodic events, higher levels of women's wellness will be achieved. An integrative science enhances research promoting women's health and patterns of care aimed at disease prevention.

Pre-conceptual health promotion should not be approached as an isolated activity. Instead, a new approach to women's wellness is needed. Rather than targeting care to women based on their pregnancy status or desires, health promotion and disease prevention should be integrated into a continuum of care throughout the life cycle. When care for women is viewed as an integrated continuum approach to health, rather than as a series of episodic events, higher levels of women's wellness will be achieved. This approach is likely to result in healthier women, pregnancies, and offspring. These outcomes are consistent with the goals of pre-conceptual health promotion.

Preconception care is recognized as a critical component of health care for women of reproductive age. The main goal of preconception care is to provide health promotion, screening, and interventions for women of reproductive age to reduce risk factors that might affect future pregnancies. Preconception care is part of a larger health-care model that results in healthier women, infants, and families. Indeed, the preconception care will improve the health of each woman before any pregnancy and thereby affect the future health of the woman, her child, and her family

Improving preconception health can result in improved reproductive health outcomes, with potential for reducing societal costs as well. Preconception care aims to promote the health of women of reproductive age before conception and thereby improve pregnancy-related outcomes. Therefore, the goals of the 10 recommendations in this report are to improve a woman's health before conception, whether before a first or a subsequent pregnancy.

Recommendations to Improve Preconception Health

Ten recommendations were developed for improving preconception health through changes in consumer knowledge, clinical practice, public health programs, health-care financing, and data and research activities.

1. Individual Responsibility Across the Lifespan. Each woman, man, and couple should be encouraged to have a reproductive life plan.
2. Consumer Awareness. Increase public awareness of the importance of preconception health behaviors and preconception care services by using information and tools appropriate across various ages; literacy, including health literacy; and cultural/linguistic contexts.
3. Preventive Visits. As a part of primary care visits, provide risk assessment and educational and health promotion counseling to all women of childbearing age to reduce reproductive risks and improve pregnancy outcomes.
4. Interventions for Identified Risks. Increase the proportion of women who receive interventions as follow-up to preconception risk screening, focusing on high priority interventions.
5. Inter-conception Care. Use the inter-conception period to provide additional intensive interventions to women who have had a previous pregnancy that ended in an adverse outcome.
6. Pre-pregnancy Checkup. Offer, as a component of maternity care, one pre-pregnancy visits for couples and persons planning pregnancy.
7. Health Insurance Coverage for Women with Low Incomes. Increase public and private health insurance coverage for women with low incomes to improve access to preventive women's health and preconception and inter-conception care.
8. Public Health Programs and Strategies. Integrate components of preconception health into existing local public health and related programs, including emphasis on inter-conception interventions for women with previous adverse outcomes.
9. Research. Increase the evidence base and promote the use of the evidence to improve preconception health.
10. Monitoring Improvements. Maximize public health surveillance and related research mechanisms to monitor preconception health[1,2].

Conclusion

The 10 recommendations for improving preconception care services and the health of women and infants were developed through a process of consultation with a select panel of specialists from the relevant disciplines.

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Source of Support: Nil

Implementation of the recommendations will help achieve the vision of preconception health and pregnancy outcomes in which

1. Women and men of childbearing age have high reproductive awareness (i.e., understand risk factors related to childbearing).
2. Women and men have a reproductive life plan (e.g., whether or when they want to have children and how they will maintain their reproductive health).
3. Pregnancies are intended and planned.
4. Women and men of childbearing age have health-care coverage.
5. Women of childbearing age are screened before pregnancy for risks related to the outcomes of pregnancy.
6. Women with a previous adverse pregnancy outcome (e.g., infant death, very low birthweight or preterm birth) have access to inter-conception care aimed at reducing their risks.

Improving preconception health will require changes in the knowledge and attitudes and behaviors of persons, families, communities, and institutions (e.g., government and health-care settings).

Several preconception care interventions have reduced risk and improved health outcomes. By increasing support for provision of preconception care, policy makers have the opportunity to promote broad-based programs and services aimed at improving the health of women, children, and families. The recommendations present a conceptual frame work for innovative service delivery models so that women are afforded the benefit of risk-appropriate preconception services during every encounter with the health-care system.

Reference

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