Development and Feasibility Test of a Antenatal Educational Program for Adjustment of Pregnant Couple

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Purpose:
This study was done to develop a couple focused antenatal educational program for the first time pregnant couple’s parental role and couple relationship adjustment and to test the program’s feasibility.

Methods:
Based on the theory of becoming a mother of R.T. Mercer, we have developed couple focused antenatal educational program for social role preparation, maternal/paternal well-being promotion, maternal/paternal self-care promotion, maternal/paternal fetal attachment promotion, infant care instruction. It consisted of four sessions with 1 hour education and counseling for 4 weeks. The feasibility test was performed to test acceptability and effect of the education program from pre- to post-measurement for 33 first-time pregnant couples. Measurement for parental role adjustment were antenatal depression, perceived stress, maternal fetal attachment and paternal fetal attachment, infant care confidence, fear of childbirth and dyadic adjustment was measured to evaluate the couple relationship adjustment.

Results:
As for total 33 married couples, mean age of pregnant women and their husbands was 32.30(SD=3.11) and 33.21(SD=6.25) years old, respectively. They’ve been married for 2.34(SD=1.63)years, and pregnant for 31.30(SD=2.66) weeks, 78.79% of the couples had planned pregnancy. The levels of antenatal depression (t=1.89, p=0.034), perceived stress (t=2.18, p=0.018), and fear of childbirth (t=2.12, p=0.021) of pregnant women were significantly decreased, and scores of maternal-fetal attachment (t=-3.28, p=0.001) and infant care confidence (t=-4.02, p=0.000) of pregnant women were significantly increased, too. For spouses, scores of paternal-fetal attachment (t=-3.06, p=0.002) and infant care confidence (t=-1.85, p=0.037) were significantly increased. However, pregnant women’s and their spouses’ marital satisfaction were not significantly increased (t=1.01, p=0.161).

Conclusion:
Levels of fetal attachment and infant care confidence were increased in both pregnant women and spouses, but levels of antenatal depression and perceived stress were decreased only in pregnant women. This study has demonstrated that couple antenatal education was acceptable as it brought awareness and preparation of parenting roles and improved communication among pregnant couples. This program seems to be effective to improve their parenting role preparation, not yet on couple relationship after the education. Further evaluation is needed to test long term effect of the education on couple relationship during their postpartum period.

Title:
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Keywords:
antenatal education, pregnant couple and theory of becoming a mother

Abstract Summary:
For women's health care providers and family health providers, this research for development and feasibility test about the couple focused antenatal educational program based on R.T. Mercer's Theory of Becoming A Mother would be helpful to apply their practice and research

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