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### Pregnancy and Delivery over the Decades

As you can imagine, medical care has changed drastically over the last thirty years. One reason is all the advancements in medical care. Another is the rise of value in a dollar. My two children alone are just over a decade apart. The medical care I received changed entirely in relevance to my age, financial, social and marital status. Can you imagine the medical care a woman received while pregnant and having the baby three decades ago and how it compares to a woman who has done the same within the last five years?

In June 1981 Subject 1, an average healthy female, became pregnant with her second child. Subject 2, a female with anemia, found out she was pregnant with her second child in February 2007. Even with the twenty six year gap, Subject 2 and Subject 1 had two things in common with their prenatal care; their physicians recommend prenatal vitamins and exercise. Different from Subject 1, Subject 2 was asked to start a calcium supplement. Subject 2 had already been taking Iron Sulfate for anemia. After finding out she was pregnant she had to increase the dose to 500mg daily. Diet changes eventually became necessary as well for both.

Both Subject 2 and Subject 1 were aware of a pregnancy disorder called Preeclampsia,

“... high blood pressure and extra amounts of protein in the urine ... Left untreated, preeclampsia can lead to serious — even fatal — complications for both [mother] and ...

baby” (Mayo). Subject 2 tried to stick to low sodium, Mediterranean diet. Subject 1’s diet consisted of low sodium, lots of vegetables, fruits and lean meats. Subject 1 became hypoglycemic during her pregnancy. This is, “Low levels of blood sugar, which is [the] body's main energy source ... untreated ... Seizure, Loss of consciousness [and], Death [are complications]” (Mayo). Unfortunately, though careful, she ended up with preeclampsia too. Both Subject 1 and Subject 2 exercised daily as recommended by their physicians until restrictions were enforced.

Subject 1 walked daily until the swelling from preeclampsia made the feat difficult and risk restrictions were put in place. An active runner, Subject 2 continued to do so until the baby became heavier and began to rest in her low back affecting her sciatica nerve. This caused severe back and hip pain. This nerve is, “... located in the back of the leg and compression can cause pain, tingling or burning sensation” (Anderson). At that point she had to slow down and start walking for exercise.

With agonizing back pain, Subject 2 had ultrasounds done that showed the baby was resting on the intestines preventing food from expelling after digestion. This caused a weight gain of 110lbs by the end of pregnancy. Subject 2 stated that “The doctors were very supportive telling me that I would get it off after I gave birth...” Subject 1 remembers bleeding at three months along. She went to the hospital and had to stay overnight for possible miscarriage. Subject 1 recalls, “... doctors waited till the next morning to do an ultrasound to see if the baby was still alive. They found the heart beat and it was strong. They rushed me to surgery to place a cervical tie.” Also called a cervical cerclage, “... the patient’s cervix is sewn shut with sutures ...” (Mayo). Subject 1 still gets upset by what the

physician had told her during a visit, “I gained 75lbs due to preeclampsia. The doctor told me I was too fat and if my baby dies it is going to be my fault! He was not personable.”

Treatment you receive can change depending on where you live. Subject 2 and her husband moved back to Yuma from Washington DC to be closer to family after finding out she was pregnant. The care she received there for the beginning of the pregnancy was described as, “... crazy and overwhelming. The nurses at this clinic were all in my business wanting to know what I was eating and what hours I was eating, wanted to know what time of the day I was exercising ... I was glad we came home.” Subject 1 stated they did not have to do anything special for this pregnancy except, “... buy the baby furniture...”

Subject 2 was in the hospital for only five minutes when she realized she was, “... getting treated with the upmost respect.” Subject 2 received Stadol for her contraction relief, pain medication, which,

“... only the edge was taken away from the contractions. Shortly after ... it gave me an amnesia effect. I ended up flipping out ... I didn't realize I was pregnant. I thought they had put me in a mental hospital and had me tied down. It took two hours for the Stadol to wear off. Even after all that, the staff still treated me with courtesy and were very friendly.”

On the other hand, a few decades back Subject 1 was a planned c-section and began having contractions. After arriving at the hospital the doctor came in the room. At that point Subject 1 told him,

“I have been having contractions for two hours and I am a scheduled c-section. He looked at me like I was dumb. ‘How do you even know what contractions feel like?’ Infuriated, I forcefully slammed his hand on my

stomach in the middle of a contraction. The doctor ran out screaming for a nurse to call the OR!”

Subject 1’s husband was allowed in the OR with her to see the baby delivered. She was put under general anesthesia for the procedure so she was unable to witness the birth. In order for Subject 2 to see the vaginal birth of her baby, “... a large mirror was put up by my feet.”

Subject 2 was able to keep the baby with her while she recovered. She, her new son and her husband were allowed to stay in the same room until her and baby was discharged home. Subject 1 was not supposed to keep the baby in her room. Subject 1 stated that “They still kept them in the nursery at this time. I just kept refusing to let them take her away from me. The nurses were pissed ... all well. I kept her with me until I was discharged and we both went home....”

As we can see medical changes in the labor and delivery field have come a long way. Weight gain, supplements, nutrition and exercise have changed in amounts, needs and length but are still recommended today just as they were back then. In these two cases we can genuinely see that over the decade’s bedside manners and medical facilities have made changes in how they handle obstetrics. You can defiantly see the change in care from Subject 2 to Subject 1 when it came to the physicians regarding weight gain! You can also see the changes in care between supplement (calcium) recommendations as well. Comparing them, both were recommended to exercise and take prenatal vitamins. It is a personal opinion on how a physician’s mannerism may actually be.

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## Summary

From personal to my career experience at YRMC I know that the medical field has come a long way in how we handle deliveries, medications prescribed, nutrition recommended and even exercise limitations. Even with the twenty-six year gap between births, my subjects were recommended to take prenatal vitamins. This is also stated as a must in our text on page 73. Balanced nutrition is still recommended today as it was back then too. Proper nutrition will help in a woman's proper weight gain. This is stated as being, "... 25 – 30 pounds ..." in our text, (Berk 71). This is not true to all situations as you saw with my subject Subject 2. Physician's manners have also changed a great deal considering my subject Subject 1's experience. Pregnancy is such an emotional experience for anyone and should not include being treated impertinently by a physician.

If you remember, Subject 1 was put under general anesthesia for her c-section. It does not say why but in our text it says that "... many needless cesareans are performed," (Berk 78). For women that have ever had a child, an epidural only numbs the lower half of the body. You are still able to move your upper half. Without having to quote outside of our text I am assuming it is because they do not want the woman to move while they are trying to cut through the abdominal tissue.

When it comes down to it, every individual is different. You have to do what is comfortable for your body based on your physician's approval. Every physician has a different opinion on how they want to treat patients. The same can be said for every woman

who becomes pregnant. They will eventually learn a way that they feel is best to deliver their baby whether it is natural, home or another form of child-birth.

## Notes on Subject 1

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Child – Pseudonym

-Date of Birth : 1 / 10 / 1982

-Time of Birth : 0315

- Location of Birth : Houston, Tx Katie Memorial Medical Center

-Weight at Birth : 7lbs 3oz

-Fourth pregnancy, Second live birth, Two previous miscarriages

- 1) 3 mos started to bleed/ possible miscarriage. Hospitalized overnight. Us next morning, found heart beat, rushed to surg to have surgical tie. Had to wear a surgical corset. No lifting/sex.
  - Blood sugars dropped for no reason. Dr's attitude was pretty much, "do it my way or the highway" Hypoglycemia. Preeclampsia had to elevate legs every nite. Gained 75lbs due to it. At visit Dr said I was too fat and if my baby dies it's going to be all my fault(crying) he was rude and not personable. Couldn't change doctors, didn't have insurance.
- 2) Ate low Na, lots of vegis, fruits and lean meats. Became even more important when my sugars dropped and preeclampsia kicked in. no salt sucks as it is.
- 3) Walked in the beginning. After preeclampsia, due to fluid gain and restrictions couldn't exercise anymore. Never drank/smoked. Got depressed cuz of diet. Once ate half a chocolate cake and got so sick I puked it up.
- 4) Bought baby furniture and had to rearrange older daughter's room to fit in the crib.
- 5) I had to have a cervical tie so I was a scheduled c-section. Husband was allowed to go in the OR with me. He stood by my side the whole time.
- 6) Started having contractions, waited a couple of hrs before going to hospital. The doctor looked at me like I was dumb and said did I know what contractions felt like since my other child was a c-section as well so I didn't know what I was talking about. I was pissed as hell. I grabbed his hand slammed it on my stomach to where it bounced back off. When his hand came back down on me I was in the middle of another contraction. He ran screaming for a nurse to call the OR and get it ready.
- 7) Complete. The nurses were pissed at me and didn't like it but all well. At this time they still kept the newborns in the nursery. I just kept refusing to let them take her away from me. I kept her with me until I was discharged and we both went home.

- \* ) To OR at 0100 on 1 / 10 / 82. Woke up from surgery at 0430.
- \* ) I didn't get to see them remove her from me. They put me under general anesthesia. He was allowed to hold her for a few minutes before they took her to be examined. She was born 6 weeks early and was jaundice.

## Notes on Subject 2

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Child – Pseudonym

-Date of Birth : 8 / 1 / 07

-Time of Birth : 0345

- Location of Birth : Yuma, Az YRMC

-Weight at Birth : 7lbs 0oz

-Second pregnancy, Second live birth, No miscarriages

- 1) Anemia – Fe Sulfate 500mg daily, Ca supplement, Hyperthyroidism. While pregnant, baby rested on intestines (us) preventing food from digesting completely, slowly leaves intestines creating extreme weight gain of 110lbs. Otherwise healthy.
- 2) Had to quit running due to sciatica. Severe back and hip pain due to baby staying low and in back area. Continued to walk for exercise.
- 3) Moved back home from Washington DC to Yuma Az to be closer to family. Husband made career changes to better serve family. Prenatal care in Washington was crazy and overwhelming. The nurses at this clinic were all in my business wanting to know what I was eating and what hours I was eating, wanted to know what time of the day I was exercising, I felt like asking them if they wanted to know how many times a day I was having sex too. You could not imagine what it felt like when he told me we were going back, I was glad we came home
- 4) He supported me the whole time even though I was cussing him out and basically ripping him a new one. After I got some pain killers that worked and could calm down, I remembered having him there was important to me.
- 5) Chose stadol as my pain reliever. Mistake! It gave me a severe amnesia effect. I ended up flipping out on everyone including my husband. I didn't realize I was pregnant and I thought they had put me in a mental hospital and had me tied down.
- 6) They were fantastic. Even after I went all crazy psycho on them. Treated me with curtesy and respect!
- 7) They placed a large mirror down by my feet so I could watch the every bit of the birth. I was able to see all aspects from the head first coming out to them eventually having to cut me.



- 8) As much as I wanted. The baby stayed in the same room my husband and I did. We stayed together till we were both discharged from the hospital.
- \*) It took roughly 2 hrs for the stadol to wear off. Then I ended up getting the epidural.
- \*) My husband was able to participate in the birthing process by cutting the baby's cord and help the nurses give the baby his first bath.

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