

Towards promotion of maternal health: the psychological impact of obstetric fistula on women in Zimbabwe

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Abstract

Objectives: The study sought to determine the psychological effects of obstetric fistula on women in Zimbabwe.

Methods: The study was qualitative in nature and the phenomenological design was used. Purposive sampling was used to identify four women with obstetric fistula in two hospitals in Zimbabwe. In-depth interviews using unstructured interview guides were done with these women. Strict ethical principles were adhered to in order to avoid harm to participants. Data that was obtained from the interviews was grouped into themes and analysed using content analysis.

Results: The results of the study revealed that women with obstetric fistula faced the following psychological problems- helplessness, sadness, suicidal thoughts, stigma and blame, feelings of worthlessness, fear, shame and social withdrawal.

Conclusions: Women with obstetric fistula face a number of psychological problems and henceforth issues to do with their mental health need to be taken seriously.