



Gentle C-Section: The Role of an L&D Lactation Nurse in Improving Maternal-Newborn Bonding Experience During Cesarean Section

JANICE CAMPBELL

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ABSTRACT



Background: Human beings' evolutionary history has proven that neonatal survival depends on close and continuous maternal-newborn contact. The gentle c-section overall purpose is to invoke a peaceful, calm atmosphere that closely mimics what happens during and immediately after vaginal childbirth. The usage of a clear sterile C-section drape during surgery, early placement of the infant skin-to-skin with the mother in the operating room, with minimal mother-baby separation, noise reduction, and initiation of breastfeeding in the operation room distinguish the practice of gentle C-section from the traditional cesarean delivery.

Purpose: To evaluate patients' and staff's satisfaction with the presence of a lactation nurse promoting maternal-newborn bonding through early skin-to-skin contact and breastfeeding initiation in the operating room during scheduled C-sections.

Methods: In this multimethod qualitative-quantitative research, two groups of participants were surveyed. Group 1 consisted of physicians, PAs, and RNs, attending cesarean births. Group 2 consisted of postpartum patients after a scheduled repeat C-section. Participants answered questions about their perception of the gentle C-section process, safety, and benefits. Data analysis was performed using descriptive statistics. The following four steps were followed to optimize the qualitative analysis process: 1) comprehending, 2) synthesizing, 3) theorizing, and 4) recontextualizing.

Results: The study results revealed that mothers are more confidently handling their newborns after experiencing a gentle C-section with a lactation RN's support. Mothers verbalized increased confidence in their ability to breastfeed and bond with the babies. 85.5% of mothers expressed overall extreme satisfaction with their childbirth experience as opposed to their previous C-section experience, and 14.7% were satisfied "quite a bit." 50% of healthcare providers stated that gentle C-section was "extremely safe," and 22.7% of participants stated that it was "quite a bit" and "moderately" safe, respectively. Both groups found the lactation RN presence beneficial.

Conclusions: The involvement of a lactation RN during a C-section improves mothers' experience with birth, skin-to-skin contact, and confidence in breastfeeding. Gentle C-section with lactation RN support is deemed a safe practice by health care providers. We suggest that future qualitative studies be conducted to understand the lived experience of women undergoing a gentle C-section.

CORRESPONDING AUTHOR:
Janice Campbell, MSN, RN,
LCCE, IBCLC

Coordinator, Parent-Child
Education/Lactation Resource
Center, Mount Sinai South
Nassau, US

janice.campbell@snch.org

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COMPETING INTERESTS

The author has no competing interests to declare.

AUTHOR AFFILIATIONS

Janice Campbell, MSN, RN, LCCE, IBCLC

Coordinator, Parent-Child Education/Lactation Resource Center, Mount Sinai South Nassau, US

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