

OBSTETRICS

The maternal childbirth experience more than a decade after delivery

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The purpose of this study was to understand mothers' perspective of childbirth and how mothers remember the event over 10 years after giving birth.

This study included information from 576 MOAD participants, using information that was gathered from the Year-6 study survey. This survey included questions about how mothers felt about their first delivery. For example, the survey included prompts such as, "my childbirth experience made me feel...disappointed, enthusiastic, satisfied, delighted or depressed". Participants were asked whether or not they experienced these feelings after their first birth.

For this study, we measured the mother's experience of childbirth in 3 ways:

- Fulfillment – feelings of delight or enthusiasm
- Distress – feelings of unpleasantness
- Difficulty – feelings of pain or discomfort as well as physical effort

We compared women in four different groups. The first was a cesarean delivery with no labor, the second a cesarean delivery performed after the start of labor. The third delivery was a vaginal delivery without forceps or vacuum to deliver the baby. The last group was a vaginal delivery with the help of either forceps or vacuum to deliver the baby.

Important findings:

- One important finding is that when comparing women who delivered vaginally, women who delivered vaginally with the use of forceps or vacuum experienced less fulfillment, higher distress and higher difficulty.
- Another important finding is that women who delivered by cesarean without labor had high fulfillment scores.

Our findings suggest that that fulfillment is higher when women deliver via their planned mode of delivery. If women planned to have a vaginal delivery, fulfillment was higher when they had that vaginal delivery. When women planned to have a vaginal delivery but needed to have a cesarean delivery, they experienced a less fulfilling delivery.

The last important finding from our study is that childbirth has a **BIG IMPACT** on a mother's life and is an important experience which mothers remember more than 10 years after giving birth.