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PERCEPTIONS AND NEEDS OF PREGNANT WOMEN IN PRENATAL CARE

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ABSTRACT

Prenatal care, essential for the promotion of maternal and child health, is capable of reducing gestational and neonatal morbidity and mortality. The general objective of this study was to understand the perception of pregnant women regarding prenatal care, focusing on the importance of family participation, quarterly exams and the frequency of consultations. Using a qualitative systematic review methodology, articles published between 2019 and 2024 in the Lilacs and Scielo databases were surveyed. Relevant studies in Portuguese on prenatal care and the perception of pregnant women about the follow-up received were included. The analysis resulted in 22 articles, showing that pregnant women perceive prenatal care as an essential practice, valuing the presence of family as a source of emotional support, the importance of periodic exams to monitor possible complications and the regularity of consultations for closer and safer follow-up. However, limitations were observed, such as access barriers and insufficient information that compromised the experience of some pregnant women. It is concluded that effective prenatal care, with a focus on humanization and health education, is essential to provide a positive gestational experience. The findings point to the need for public policies that improve access and promote comprehensive care, contributing to better maternal and neonatal outcomes and meeting pregnant women's expectations of safe and welcoming prenatal care.

Keywords: Pregnant women. Prenatal. Perceptions and Needs.

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INTRODUCTION

Prenatal care is one of the fundamental pillars for the promotion of maternal and child health, and is considered essential to reduce gestational and neonatal morbidity and mortality rates. In Brazil, the Unified Health System (SUS) has a prenatal care model that aims to provide broad coverage, with regular consultations, preventive exams and multiprofessional care. Prenatal care seeks to monitor pregnancy in a comprehensive way, addressing not only physical health, but also the emotional, social, and cultural demands of pregnant women. However, pregnant women's adherence to and experience with prenatal care depend, to a large extent, on the way they perceive this follow-up, which makes the study of pregnant women's perception of prenatal care a strategic tool to improve care practices and public policies in the area of maternal and child health (ANDRADE; SAINTS; DUARTE, 2019; DAYS; OLIVEIRA, 2019).

Understanding the perception of pregnant women regarding prenatal care involves exploring central aspects that directly influence their adherence and satisfaction with the service provided. Studies suggest that family participation plays an important role for many pregnant women, as it offers emotional support that is reflected in greater security and well-being. The involvement of the partner and other family members in the process can strengthen the affective bond, encourage adherence to recommended care, and reduce the feeling of insecurity that often accompanies the gestational period (BOREL et al., 2021; MEDEIROS et al., 2020). The presence of family members not only creates a supportive environment, but also contributes to a shared understanding of the care and needs of the pregnant woman, promoting a support network that enhances the positive effects of prenatal care.

In addition, quarterly examinations represent a critical component for the proper follow-up of pregnancy, allowing monitoring maternal-fetal health and early detection of possible complications. These tests, recommended and ensured by the SUS, are essential for risk prevention and intervention in cases of gestational comorbidities, such as hypertension and gestational diabetes, which are prevalent in some pregnancies. Thus, pregnant women's perception of the importance of these tests may reflect their understanding and appreciation of preventive practices, contributing to the effectiveness of prenatal care and the success of perinatal outcomes (CANABARRO; SOUZA, 2021; SAINTS; DIAS, 2021).

Another crucial factor for effective prenatal care is the regularity of consultations, which allows for continuous monitoring of the physiological and psychological changes of the pregnant woman, ensuring dynamic support adapted to her needs throughout the

pregnancy. The frequency of prenatal consultations is associated with greater success in gestational outcomes, as it allows adjustments in the care plan and early interventions in case of changes in the pregnant woman's clinical condition. The perception of pregnant women about the importance of these frequent consultations is essential to understand their expectations and assess the factors that influence their adherence, providing valuable subsidies to improve the care provided by health teams (SOUZA et al., 2020; SILVA et al., 2022).

The general objective of this study is to know the perception of pregnant women about prenatal care, with a focus on specifically investigating the importance attributed to the participation of family members, the performance of quarterly exams and the frequency of consultations. Such an analysis aims not only to understand how these factors impact the experience of pregnant women, but also to provide evidence that can support public policies and care practices aimed at a more humanized and inclusive prenatal care. Identifying the expectations and perceptions of pregnant women will allow health professionals and managers to develop strategies that encourage adherence to prenatal care and promote more comprehensive and welcoming care, meeting the biopsychosocial needs of pregnant women more effectively (SILVA; SAVIOUR; BARBOZA, 2022; COSTA et al., 2022).

Thus, this study is justified by the relevance of adapting health services to the demands and particularities of pregnant women, promoting prenatal care that considers the social, family and emotional context of these women. By addressing the perception of pregnant women regarding the importance of family support, preventive exams and frequency of follow-up, this study seeks to contribute to the strengthening of maternal and child health policies, promoting quality care that encourages adherence and provides a positive gestational experience. Thus, it is hoped that the findings of this study can guide the creation of more appropriate interventions and guidelines, ensuring that prenatal care is a space for comprehensive care and valuing the protagonism of pregnant women.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

This study is a qualitative systematic review research, using the steps described by Sampaio and Mancini (2007), with the objective of synthesizing and presenting evidence on prenatal care for pregnant women.

The research was carried out with the objective of identifying studies that discuss prenatal care in pregnant women, especially those that involve, in general, the perception of pregnant women about prenatal care, and, more specifically, the importance attributed to

the participation of family members, the performance of quarterly exams and the frequency of consultations. The databases used were Lilacs and Scielo, as they concentrate a large part of scientific publications in the health area, especially in Latin American and Caribbean countries. The choice of these databases aimed to ensure relevance and free access to high-quality scientific sources.

The searches were carried out between the months of August and November 2024. The previously established inclusion criteria covered all studies on prenatal care for pregnant women, published between 2019 and 2024, written in Portuguese, and with full text available. The health descriptors (DeCS) used were: "pregnant" AND "prenatal" AND "care", applying search filters such as "full text" and "last 5 years".

Studies were included that: discuss prenatal care for pregnant women; published in Portuguese between 2019 and 2024; available in full text in the Lilacs and Scielo databases. The exclusion criteria included: studies not directly related to the theme of prenatal care; articles that were not available in Portuguese or whose publication period was prior to 2019.

The extracted data included: author, year of publication, objective and authors' conclusions. All data were organized in Microsoft Excel spreadsheets to facilitate comparison between studies. The analysis of the results was performed descriptively, focusing on the interventions and prenatal care discussed in each study.

The qualitative systematic review followed a rigorous and detailed approach, with the objective of exploring the evidence on pregnant women's perception of prenatal care.

RESULTS

132 articles on the subject were retrieved. The exclusion criteria were studies not directly related to the theme on the perception of pregnant women regarding prenatal care; articles that were not available in Portuguese or whose publication period was prior to 2019.Thus, 22 articles were selected whose data were extracted and analyzed in a descriptive way, focusing on the evidence on prenatal care in pregnant women, discussed in each study.

The perception of pregnant women about prenatal care has been the object of study in several studies that seek to identify the main factors that impact the maternal experience during gestational follow-up. Chart 1 presents a summary of the studies carried out in the last five years, covering different aspects of prenatal care. Among the topics addressed, the quality of care and the importance of welcoming in primary care, the perception of pregnant women about the role of nursing, family involvement in monitoring and the relevance of

exams and frequency of consultations stand out. These studies indicate that quality prenatal care, which encompasses emotional support and educational support, contributes significantly to maternal well-being and to pregnant women's adherence to prenatal care.

Chart 1 - Summary of studies on the perception of pregnant women in relation to prenatal care in the last five years

Author	Year	Job Title	Objective	Conclusion
Andrade, Santos and Duarte	2019	The Pregnant Women's Perception of the Quality of Prenatal Care in UBS, Campo Grande, MS	To contribute to the improvement of the quality of prenatal care in the basic health units (UBSs) of the municipality of Campo Grande, MS, building knowledge according to the perception of the pregnant woman	It was noticed that for prenatal care to be of quality, it is necessary that professionals and pregnant women walk together. Professionals need to create ways for pregnant women not to miss appointments and they can clarify their doubts, with no barriers that hinder this communication.
Bezerra e Oliveira	2021	The perception of puerperal women about the care received in prenatal care	to know the perception of puerperal women attended at a Normal Birth Center about the care received in prenatal care	From the point of view of the puerperal women, prenatal care made it possible to build a bond with the health team through humanized care, prevailing satisfaction with the care received during pregnancy. However, the study signaled the existence of weaknesses in terms of access to health units and the waiting time for the tests requested in prenatal care. Conclusion: it is necessary to advance to effectively achieve the quality of prenatal care and to improve the professional practices of primary care to meet the expectations of women during care during the pregnancy period
Borel, et al.	2021	Pregnant women's perception of the participation and involvement of the partner/father in the pregnancy	To evaluate the conditions of participation of men in the pregnancy of their partner in the perception of pregnant women attended in Primary Health Care services.	The presence and involvement of the father is evidenced, which comprises several aspects, especially the emotional bond and affectivity. Also, a paternal position more involved in activities previously seen as only maternal, but still little present in health care routines.
Canabarro e Souza	2021	Pregnant women's perception of prenatal care and complications during the pregnancy-	To identify pregnant women's perception of prenatal care and pregnancy complications	Pregnant women adhered to prenatal care from the beginning; The quality of care helped in the early detection of complications The quality of prenatal care contributes to the well-being of pregnant women and the prevention of complications.

		puerperal period		
Carvalho e Oliveira	2020	Pregnant adolescents' perceptions of prenatal nursing care	To describe the perception of adolescents about nursing care in prenatal care	Adolescents see the reception and family help in prenatal care positively; suggest improvements in nurses' communication. Need to expand and improve prenatal care provided by nurses for adolescents.
Chagas and Fernandes	2020	Pregnant women's perception of the role of nursing in prenatal care	To identify pregnant women's knowledge about the role of nursing in prenatal care	Pregnant women highlighted the importance of bonding with the nurse, clarifying doubts and emotional support Quality prenatal care reduces maternal and infant morbidity and mortality.
Costa, et al.	2022	Pregnant women's perception of self-care in prenatal care	To analyze the perception of pregnant women about self-care in prenatal care based on educational interventions.	From the analysis of the discourses on the perception of pregnant women regarding self-care in prenatal care, four thematic categories emerged: the self-care practices perceived by pregnant women in their daily lives; the perceptions of pregnant women about self-care after educational activities; the perceptions of pregnant women about self-care and care for the child; and the perception of pregnant women about educational actions.
Dias and Oliveira	2019	Pregnant women's perception of nursing care during habitual risk prenatal care	To know the perception of pregnant women about nursing care in prenatal care at usual risk	Pregnant women see care as a moment of care and learning, but perceive insecurity in the nurse's exclusive care. Nursing care for pregnant women has been considered as a moment of singularity of care based on welcoming and listening. However, some pregnant women feel insecure when accompanied by nurses, which reveals a lack of knowledge of the technical and scientific capacity of these professionals and the hegemony in the biomedical model.
Gama, et al.	2022	Women's perception of pregnancy: experience and care	Reflect on the woman's perception of the gestational process.	It was seen in the plurality of articles the fear, concern, depression and anxiety about the pregnancy and what could come along with it, in addition to the care that this pregnant woman will receive to analyze her gestational health, and it is

				essential that the multiprofessional team comes to play its role in the most humanized way, leaving the pregnant woman more calm and safe for the moment of delivery and postpartum.
Godoy and Almeida	2023	Pregnant women's perception of the nursing team's care in high-risk prenatal care	To identify the perception of pregnant women regarding the care of the nursing team in high-risk prenatal care and to provide the result to the Dr Edward Maluf Municipal Polyclinic in the city of Sorocaba.	The study showed visibility for the nursing team to develop high-risk prenatal activities as well, as their actions are organized in a systematized way and based on scientific knowledge. He stressed that there is a need to break with the paradigms that limit their function and emphasize centered medical care.
Kawatsu et al.	2020	Postpartum women's perception of care received at the Basic Health Unit during the prenatal consultation	To identify and disseminate the perception of postpartum women who received prenatal care in the Basic Health Units (UBS) in the western region of the city of Sorocaba in relation to the prenatal consultations experienced.	The results showed that most of the interviewees reported quality care during prenatal consultations, totaling the emergence of nine Central Ideas (CI). Adequate care during prenatal consultations is essential for compliance with the principles guided by the Unified Health System. Health (SUS) that involve health promotion, prevention, recovery and rehabilitation.
Lazzarin	2021	Perception of pregnant women treated in the Unified Health System about dental prenatal care	To identify and disseminate the perception of postpartum women who received prenatal care in the Basic Health Units (UBS) in the western region of the city of Sorocaba in relation to the prenatal consultations experienced.	Regarding the perception of oral health, it was evidenced that, regardless of the age group, all consider that they should take more care of their teeth. However, fear prevailed in performing dental care during this period. When asked about having already received dental instruction during pregnancy, most stated that they had, however, a portion of the interviewees considered access to information about dental prenatal care precarious and would like more information about it. Those who use the SUS for dental care were predominant, and there was a predominance of non-perception of gingival bleeding during pregnancy. The results can serve as parameters for the improvement of dental prenatal care, and the insertion of HC in the

				programs, aiming at better efficacy in the care of pregnant women and that they are increasingly educated, breaking the limitation in the search for care.
Livramento et al.	2019	Pregnant women's perceptions of prenatal care in primary health care	To understand pregnant women's perceptions of prenatal care received in primary care	Humanized reception and emotional support were aspects valued; group of pregnant women brought collective learning Personalized and welcoming attention is essential for the satisfaction of pregnant women.
Lodoso and Lobato	2023	Pregnant women's perception of nursing consultations and medical consultations received during prenatal care	evaluate the care provided to pregnant women in a Basic Health Unit in São Luís – Maranhão	In this study, it was possible to observe the perception of pregnant women in relation to the guidance received in their prenatal care. Most of them claim to have received guidance, which makes us believe, at first, that professionals are carrying out this practice, where in view of the research it was pointed out that 53% of the pregnant women were in the age group between 20 and 25 years; regarding marital status, 57% were single; 42% of these pregnant women were in their 1st pregnancy; 58% had prenatal care in other pregnancies; 50% had 7 or more consultations; 50% thought the service was very good; 85% of them were attended by nurses, and of these 43% felt very satisfied with the care; of those who were seen by doctors, 9% were satisfied; Regarding the clarification of their doubts, 86% felt clarified.
Mazzetto, et al.	2022	Presence of the companion from the perspective of the woman during labor, delivery and postpartum	To understand, in the perception of the puerperal woman, the meaning of the presence of the companion during labor, delivery and postpartum.	In the perception of the puerperal women, the presence of the companion generates security, support and sharing of the moment with someone; confidence, with physical and emotional support; strengthening of family relationships; positive and negative reception of the companion by the health team; search for information about the right of the companion; unpreparedness for childbirth.

Medeiros, et al.	2020	Pregnant women's perception of family participation in prenatal care	To identify the factors that determine the participation or not of family members in prenatal consultations and to investigate the opinion of pregnant women about their participation during these consultations	After the analysis, it was found that of the twenty pregnant women interviewed, ten reported participating in prenatal consultations alone, in which the main reason is the work of family members, but claimed that many are concerned with the evolution of the pregnancy and emphasized the importance of the family in prenatal consultations. Among those who participated, they declared their concern with the progress of the pregnancy, but this participation does not occur in all consultations.
Santos and Dias	2021	Pregnant women's perception of prenatal care in Basic Health Units	To understand the perception of pregnant women about prenatal care	Nursing care covers biopsychosocial needs; Pregnant women see welcoming as essential. Individuality of the pregnant woman must be considered in the service; Active listening is a differential in prenatal care.
Severino et al.	2023	Pregnant women's perception of the nurse's performance in prenatal care	To identify the perception of the role of nurses in prenatal care	Weakened communication and the need for more qualified guidance; pregnant women prefer collective activities for clarification. Communication and subjective aspects should be prioritized in prenatal care to strengthen adherence and bonding with nurses.
Silva et al.	2020	Pregnant women's perception of the role of nursing in prenatal care	To identify pregnant women's knowledge about the role of nursing	Pregnant women value the support of nursing to feel safe in prenatal care and childbirth; relevance of knowing legislation and rights. Strengthening the bond and qualified care of the nurse reduces risks in prenatal care.
Silva et al.	2022	Pregnant women's perception of the prenatal care offered by the family health strategy	To know the perception of pregnant women in relation to the prenatal care offered by Primary Health Care aiming at the possibility of improving the care provided based on the perceptions identified	It was perceived that the pregnant women had low expectations regarding the quality of prenatal care, however, during the consultations, it was detected that they were positively surprised by the service provided by the FHS. It is essential to have access to information and dissemination of the services offered by the SUS regarding prenatal care, legitimizing the pregnant woman as the

				active subject of her care. The results suggest that progress is still needed to effectively achieve the quality of prenatal care in an equitable manner.
Silva; Savior; Barboza	2022	Pregnant women's perception of nursing consultations in primary health care	To know the perception of pregnant women in relation to prenatal nursing consultations carried out in Primary Health Care.	Four categories were evidenced: Knowledge; Trust in nursing care; Professional Competence; and Continuity of Care. The pregnant women considered that the nursing consultation performed by the nurse is very important for the monitoring of pregnancy, being a moment in which they can clarify their doubts, but highlight the qualification of interactions as an important point. They want health care to be permeated by actions that transmit security, affection and respect for the moment experienced. They highlight confidence in problem-solving and scientifically based nursing care. The pregnant women list that the nursing professional is competent for care during pregnancy and all of them informed that they would recommend such care to other people.
Souza, et al.	2020	Evaluation of the quality of prenatal care provided by nurses: exploratory research	Evaluate prenatal care by nurses; to analyze the nursing consultation in the perception of the pregnant woman.	The study indicated young, married pregnant women, without the nurse's encouragement to participate in their partner, but positively classified the prenatal consultation. The prenatal room has the necessary equipment, but the registration on the pregnant woman's card was inadequate.

The analysis of pregnant women's perception of prenatal care over the last few years reveals important advances and persistent challenges, particularly with regard to humanization and comprehensive care. Several studies have investigated the expectations of pregnant women, the experiences during consultations and the role of health professionals, especially nurses, in gestational follow-up. It is observed that, over time, pregnant women began to value not only the technical aspects of care, but also welcoming, communication and emotional support, which are fundamental for a more positive and safe gestational experience.

As of 2019, studies conducted by Dias and Oliveira highlight the importance of pregnant women's perception of the prenatal care offered in Basic Health Units (UBS), pointing out that satisfaction with care is intrinsically linked to the quality of reception and active listening. The pregnant women expressed an expectation of continuous follow-up and comprehensive care, where the consultations include guidance and emotional support. The authors show that, although adherence to the prenatal program is relatively high, there are still gaps in comprehensive care, especially with regard to the biopsychosocial monitoring of pregnant women (DIAS and OLIVEIRA, 2019).

Throughout 2020, with the intensification of humanized care practices, there was a strengthening of the role of nurses as biopsychosocial support agents and educators during pregnancy. This period marks an advance in the analysis of multiprofessional prenatal care, with studies such as those by Medeiros et al. (2020) and Silva et al. (2020), which highlight the importance of nurses in conducting prenatal consultations, emphasizing the holistic and humanized approach as a differential in primary care. Medeiros et al. (2020) show that the participation of the family in consultations is a positive factor that reinforces adherence to prenatal care and contributes to the safety of pregnant women. However, many pregnant women still receive prenatal care alone, which suggests the need to encourage the presence of family members and partners during follow-up (MEDEIROS et al., 2020).

Silva et al. (2020), in turn, highlight that pregnant women's perception of the role of nursing is generally positive, especially when care includes clear guidance on pregnancy and childbirth. The pregnant women reported that the presence of well-prepared nurses capable of answering their questions brings confidence and tranquility, demonstrating the relevance of humanized care and health education to strengthen the relationship between professional and pregnant women. Souza et al. reinforce that quality and humanized prenatal care reduces maternal and perinatal complications, pointing out that pregnant women perceive the nursing consultation as a space for active listening and continuous support. This study suggests the importance of permanent educational strategies for nurses to strengthen the autonomy of pregnant women in self-care and in coping with gestational challenges.

This movement continued in 2021, when the literature reinforces the value of a multiprofessional and patient-centered approach, recognizing the need to improve the bond between pregnant women and the health team. The study by Santos and Dias (2021) focuses on pregnant women's perception of prenatal care in the UBSs, highlighting that pregnant women's experience with care is generally positive, especially with regard to the role of nurses in providing biopsychosocial care and responding with empathy to individual

needs. The authors reveal that pregnant women value welcoming and humanized care, which are fundamental to promote trust and adherence to follow-up. In addition, the importance of educational activities in consultations is reinforced, suggesting that a consultation based on clear and accessible guidelines increases pregnant women's satisfaction with the service provided.

Another relevant study is that of Lazzarin et al., which highlights the need for training and sensitization of health professionals to the practice of humanized prenatal care. The study emphasizes that pregnant women expect prenatal consultations not only to be moments of physical monitoring, but also spaces to discuss doubts and fears. This work suggests that professionals should prioritize the development of a bond with the pregnant woman, in order to build a relationship of trust and continuous support (LAZZARIN et al., 2021).

In the 2022 studies, the focus of care begins to consolidate around care that respects the individuality of pregnant women, promoting their autonomy and confidence. Studies such as those by Silva et al. (2022) and Silva; Saviour; Barbosa (2022) deepen the analysis of the role of nursing consultations in Primary Health Care (PHC) and the perception of pregnant women regarding the care received. Silva et al. (2022) point out that most pregnant women consider the nursing consultation essential for the monitoring of pregnancy, allowing the clarification of doubts and providing security. The authors underline the importance of care that goes beyond technical actions, including welcoming and emotional support, which are essential to deal with the uncertainties and challenges of the gestational period.

Silva, Salvador, and Barbosa (2022) reinforce these findings, indicating that pregnant women appreciate the care of nurses when there is a comprehensive and personalized care approach, which values the safety and autonomy of the pregnant woman. The reports of the pregnant women suggest that the nurse plays a fundamental role in making prenatal care a space of trust and welcoming, contributing to a healthier and more informed pregnancy. However, the study also points out that there are still challenges in the training and practice of professionals, suggesting the need for greater emphasis on continuing education to improve the quality of prenatal care.

Finally, in 2023, there is a growing appreciation of communication and emotional support offered by professionals, with pregnant women expressing the desire for prenatal care that not only accompanies the baby's physical development, but also offers educational activities and community support. Pregnant women's perception of prenatal care continues to be marked by a growing desire for more humanized and personalized

care, which integrates not only technical actions, but also emotional support and effective communication. The study by Severino et al. (2023) specifically investigates the performance of nurses in prenatal care and identifies challenges and advances in the practice of these professionals. The pregnant women interviewed value the role of nurses, recognizing that the prenatal care offered by these professionals provides safety and emotional support during pregnancy. However, the study also points to a "fragility in communication between nurses and pregnant women" as a barrier that still needs to be overcome. This aspect suggests that technical assistance needs to be complemented with more attentive listening and more qualified guidance, aiming at a complete understanding of the needs of pregnant women (SEVERINO et al., 2023).

The research by Severino et al. also emphasizes that, although pregnant women positively perceive the role of nurses in prenatal care, they expect care to go beyond technical actions and include collective and educational activities that promote an environment of mutual support among pregnant women and stimulate the exchange of experiences. This desire for collective activities reflects a search for a more social and community service, which reinforces the bond between pregnant women and the health team. In addition, the study reinforces the need for continuing education for professionals, in order to ensure that prenatal care is a space for strengthening adherence and bonding, increasing the quality and satisfaction with the service provided (Severino et al., 2023).

Thus, the analysis of the 2023 findings shows that, although the perception of prenatal care has evolved positively, challenges remain related to the improvement of health professionals' communication skills. Pregnant women continue to seek care that is not only technically qualified, but also empathetic and integrative, where they feel safe and valued. These data suggest that continuous training and the promotion of care focused on individuality and bonding are fundamental for the consolidation of quality prenatal care that fully meets the expectations and needs of pregnant women.

This panorama shows a progressive adaptation of prenatal services to the needs and expectations of pregnant women, suggesting that, in order to achieve truly complete care, health professionals must continue to develop communication skills and maintain an empathetic and welcoming attitude. The analysis of these advances and challenges, year by year, contributes to an in-depth understanding of the transformations necessary to improve the quality of prenatal care and the satisfaction of pregnant women with the services offered.

The systematic and integrative analysis of pregnant women's perceptions of prenatal care in Basic Health Units (BHU) and Primary Health Care (PHC) services, based on

studies from the last five years, reveals central aspects that determine satisfaction, adherence and quality of care, as well as gaps and challenges that persist. These elements structure a comprehensive understanding of gestational experiences in the context of multiprofessional care and the preponderant role of nursing.

One of the recurring aspects in the studies is the impact of welcoming and humanization on the gestational experience. Research such as those by Andrade, Santos and Duarte (2019) and Santos and Dias (2021) demonstrate that welcoming, active listening and personalized attention are elements valued by pregnant women, being essential for strengthening the bond and for effective care. Pregnant women perceive prenatal care as a space not only for monitoring physical health, but also for emotional support, which relieves insecurities and favors a more peaceful and positive pregnancy. This reception, which involves clear and accessible communication, is also seen as a way to reduce barriers and promote pregnant women's adherence to follow-up (CARVALHO; OLIVEIRA, 2020).

The studies by Silva et al. (2020) and Silva; Salvador and Barboza (2022) emphasize the central role of nurses in prenatal care, highlighting the importance of qualified and scientifically based care, which values the protagonism of pregnant women. The prenatal nursing consultation is seen as an opportunity to clarify doubts and educate pregnant women about self-care and baby care, which increases the confidence and security of future mothers. In addition, multiprofessional work, with the integration of different professionals, is essential for a comprehensive and complete follow-up, especially in high-risk pregnancies, where the need for specialized technical-scientific support is even more evident (GODOY; ALMEIDA, 2023).

Despite the advances, studies such as the one by Severino et al. (2023) indicate that significant challenges persist in terms of communication. Many pregnant women still feel that communication between them and health professionals could be improved, especially in terms of clarity and consistency in guidance. The research by Severino et al. points out that qualified communication is essential for pregnant women to feel safe and well informed, which suggests the need for continuous training for health professionals in order to improve interpersonal and sensitive communication in prenatal care.

In addition to communication, access to services is also a critical aspect. Bezerra and Oliveira (2021) point out that, although the bond with the health team is generally positive, there are still weaknesses in terms of access to the UBS and the waiting time for the requested exams. This limitation of access negatively impacts the continuity of care,

pointing to a need for improvement in the organization and flow of care in PHC services to ensure that all pregnant women have adequate and timely access to services.

The promotion of self-care emerges as a relevant theme, especially in studies such as those by Costa et al. (2022), which show how educational activities in prenatal care encourage pregnant women to adopt self-care practices in their daily lives. This type of educational intervention strengthens the autonomy and empowerment of pregnant women, allowing them to better understand their role in caring for their own bodies and their babies. Studies show that, by making pregnant women aware of self-care practices, prenatal care contributes to greater safety and tranquility, minimizing perinatal risks and improving pregnancy outcomes.

The presence of a companion and family involvement are also highlighted as factors that add value to prenatal care. The research by Medeiros et al. (2020) and Borel et al. (2021) point out that emotional support and the participation of family members, especially the partner, create an environment of safety and support, which is extremely important for many pregnant women. The inclusion of the companion in prenatal consultations and other activities allows the family to get involved in the process and offer emotional support, strengthening the bond and favoring a more positive gestational experience.

Prenatal care is essential for reducing maternal and neonatal morbidity and mortality, and is widely recognized in public health policies as a priority to promote the integral health of pregnant women and babies. In Brazil, the Unified Health System (SUS) is structured to ensure access to prenatal care through Primary Health Care (PHC), with an emphasis on offering multiprofessional, comprehensive, and accessible follow-up. Documents such as the Technical Manual for Low-Risk Prenatal Care guide the standardization and qualification of practices, promoting guidelines aimed at equity in care and the prevention of complications. Public policies reinforce the role of health teams, especially nurses, as essential agents in PHC, expanding the coverage and effectiveness of the services provided during pregnancy (BRASIL, 2012).

However, the implementation of the guidelines faces challenges, especially in contexts of unequal access and distribution of resources. A study by Bezerra and Oliveira (2021) points out that, despite the guidelines, many pregnant women still find it difficult to access services, either due to geographical barriers or due to the lack of professionals and equipment in the UBS. This limitation in access compromises the continuity of care and impairs gestational outcomes, revealing a need for public policies that expand the infrastructure and capacity of care in PHC. In particular, improving turnaround time for

antenatal exams and consultations is essential to ensure that guidelines are effective in promoting maternal and newborn health.

Another relevant area in public policies is the promotion of self-care and health education, which have been incorporated into prenatal care with the aim of training pregnant women for self-care and care for the baby. Educational interventions promote greater autonomy of pregnant women and an understanding of the importance of prenatal care, which increases adherence to follow-up. Research such as that of Costa et al. (2022) demonstrates that health education programs result in better-informed and more engaged pregnant women, which favors compliance with prenatal guidance and the management of any complications. These actions are fundamental for strengthening comprehensive and humanized prenatal care, which meets the principles of universality and equity defended by the SUS.

Thus, the role of nurses in prenatal care is essential, since these professionals are responsible for a large part of routine consultations and continuous support for pregnant women. Nurses work both in the execution of technical procedures and in the promotion of welcoming and emotional support, which are essential for pregnant women to feel safe and understood during pregnancy. Studies such as that of Silva et al. (2020) show that pregnant women value the role of nurses in health education and guidance on self-care practices, highlighting that this action strengthens the bond with the health service and promotes a more positive and confident gestational experience. The nursing consultation, in addition to monitoring maternal and fetal health, is also a space for active listening, in which nurses can identify risk factors early and act preventively, contributing to the improvement of maternal and neonatal outcomes.

Despite the significant contributions, this study has some limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the articles analyzed present a methodological diversity, with variations in the number of participants, data collection methods, and study locations, which may limit the generalization of the results. In addition, most of the studies analyzed were carried out in specific contexts, often in municipalities or urban regions, which may not represent the reality of rural or remote areas, where access barriers are even more pronounced. Finally, the analysis depends on the perception of pregnant women and, although this is a valuable source of information, it does not directly contemplate the perspective of health professionals, which could enrich the understanding of prenatal challenges and practices.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The survey revealed that pregnant women have a clear perception of the importance of prenatal care to ensure a safe and healthy pregnancy. They value periodic consultations and quarterly exams, as they understand that these elements are essential to monitor their health status and detect any complications early. This positive and proactive perception of prenatal care demonstrates a growing awareness of the role of preventive care and its impact on pregnancy outcomes. However, this understanding is often limited by barriers such as difficulties in accessing services and lack of qualified information about the importance of the tests and the regularity of consultations.

Another significant aspect raised by the research is the expectation of pregnant women in relation to emotional support and multiprofessional support, especially on the part of nurses, whose performance is fundamental in Primary Health Care. Pregnant women recognize the importance of nurses as figures of continuous support and a source of guidance, highlighting that the humanized approach and active listening during consultations create an environment of trust and security. By providing clear information about prenatal care, exams and frequency of consultations, nurses, in addition to promoting self-care, strengthen the bond with pregnant women, encouraging more consistent adherence to prenatal care. However, pregnant women express the need for care that considers both technical and affective aspects, pointing out that communication is often insufficient, which compromises the quality of care.

To respond to the demands and expectations of pregnant women, it is essential that public health policies prioritize the expansion of access to prenatal care, ensuring adequate infrastructure, continuing education of professionals, and reinforcement of humanized reception practices. The inclusion of the family in prenatal care and the encouragement of partner participation are aspects that should also be strengthened, as they favor emotional support and improve the experience of pregnant women throughout pregnancy. Thus, the results of this research suggest that the improvement of prenatal practices, with a focus on humanization, adequate frequency of consultations and systematic performance of quarterly exams, is essential to ensure that prenatal care is a space of comprehensive and safe care, which fully meets the expectations and needs of pregnant women.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study reinforces the importance of qualified and humanized prenatal care. The results show that pregnant women perceive prenatal care as an essential process to ensure maternal and child health, valuing quarterly exams and the

frequency of consultations as fundamental measures for monitoring possible risks and preventing complications. However, this positive perception is often limited by challenges such as difficulties in accessing health services and deficiencies in communication between pregnant women and professionals.

The role of the nurse, highlighted by the pregnant women, is central to the promotion of a welcoming and informative environment, where they can clarify doubts and receive emotional support. This bond with the health professional contributes to a safer and more confident gestational experience, but requires continuous improvement to meet the expectations of comprehensive care, which considers the emotional and social particularities of pregnancy.

Based on these findings, this study points to the need to strengthen public policies that expand access and improve the quality of prenatal care, with an emphasis on humanization and continuing education of professionals. It is essential that prenatal care is a space for comprehensive and preventive care, ensuring that pregnant women feel welcomed and valued, and thus promoting better outcomes for maternal and child health.

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