

Endouterine fetal death and its impact on the living of the woman and of the couple: a phenomenological study

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Objective. Stillbirth affects nearly 2 million babies every year. According to the major scientific societies, fetal intrauterine death is the death of a fetus beyond 22 weeks of gestation during pregnancy or childbirth. The aim of the study is to analyze the impact of the event on the experience of the couple by analyzing any psycho-emotional and social repercussions and the relation with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Materials and Methods. A qualitative survey, conducted with phenomenological methodology according to Cohen. The study focuses on individual, semi-structured interviews administered to a sample of ten women with an intrauterine fetal death between January 2020 and September 2021 who gave birth at the U.O.C of Obstetrics and Gynecology of the A.O.U.C Policlinico di Bari.

Results. Four main themes emerged from the analysis of the interviews: "memory", "bereavement", "healthcare workers" and "change". Afterwards thirteen sub-themes were extrapolated and analyzed as can be seen in the table (Table 1).

Conclusions. It emerged that post-loss bereavement has an impact on many aspects of the future life of women and couples that does not end at the time of discharge from the hospital. Greater awareness is needed on the subject for women, operators and those around them; more information and

training, both human and theoretical. It is essential to live this experience with your partner as injured parties in equal measure and this should always be possible, even during a pandemic like the one caused by COVID-19. The couple should be psychologically supported throughout the bereavement process starting from hospitalization.

Table 1.

THEMES	SUB-THEMES
1. THE MEMORY	1.1. Everything was fine
	1.2. The belly: a safe place?
	1.3. Childbirth: meeting or rejection?
	1.4. Covid and loneliness
2. THE BEREAVEMENT	2.1. The pain belongs to everyone
	2.2. Sine causa
	2.3. And the psychologist?
3. HEALTHCARE WORKERS	3.1. Communication and management
	3.2. Training
	3.3. Differences in treatment
4. THE CHANGE	4.1. The woman from before will never come back
	4.2. The relationship with the partner
	4.3. The context