



The impact of multiparity on women's autonomy

Repercussão da multiparidade para autonomia das mulheres

Alessandra Lacerda Rodrigues

Eduarda Moniky Ferreira Rodrigues

Maria das Neves Figueiroa

ABSTRACT

Multiparity can lead to a reduction in women's autonomy. This is due to increased care demands, financial implications and social and cultural pressures. In many societies, women are expected to take primary responsibility for child rearing and household chores, while men enjoy greater freedom to pursue opportunities outside the domestic sphere (SANTOS et al, 2019).

Keywords: Multiparity, Women's, Autonomy.

RESUMO

A multiparidade pode levar à redução da autonomia da mulher. Isso se deve ao aumento das demandas de cuidados, implicações financeiras e pressões sociais e culturais. Em muitas sociedades, espera-se que as mulheres assumam a responsabilidade primária pela criação dos filhos e pelas tarefas domésticas, enquanto os homens desfrutam de maior liberdade para buscar oportunidades fora da esfera doméstica (SANTOS et al, 2019).

Palavras-chave: Multiparidade, Mulheres, Autonomia.

1 INTRODUCTION

Multiparity can lead to a reduction in women's autonomy. This is due to increased care demands, financial implications and social and cultural pressures. In many societies, women are expected to take primary responsibility for child rearing and household chores, while men enjoy greater freedom to pursue opportunities outside the domestic sphere (SANTOS et al, 2019). In addition, financial issues can further restrict women's options and hinder their access to resources and opportunities that promote their autonomy. Therefore, it is necessary to study the relationship between multiparity and the reduction of women's autonomy, considering that having many children is associated with vulnerability, as a generator or enhancer (PITILIN, 2014).

2 OBJECTIVE

To analyze the repercussions of the phenomenon of multiparity on the exercise of autonomy in a social and individual context for women.



3 METHODOLOGY

This is a descriptive exploratory study with a qualitative approach. The research took place at the Amaury de Medeiros Integrated University Health Center (CISAM), which is part of the Hospital Complex linked to the University of Pernambuco (UPE). Data was collected in February 2023, using the focus group technique.

Seven women took part in the study. The inclusion criteria for taking part in this study were: women with 3 children or more, over 18 years of age, who had an active sex life and lived in the Metropolitan Region of Recife. Those who gave up of their own free will during the study were excluded.

The topic was discussed using the following guiding question: "What did you have to give up after becoming a mother?". The participants' statements were audio-recorded, transcribed and analyzed using the Content Analysis proposed by Bardin, who proposes three stages: pre-analysis; exploration of the material; and treatment of the results. In order to preserve the identity of the research participants, they were identified using the letter "M" followed by the order number of the interview.

The research was approved by the Research Ethics Committee (CEP) of the Centro Integrado de Saúde Amaury de Medeiros - CISAM/UPE, Opinion No. 5.828.025, and was carried out in accordance with the ethical principles recommended by Resolution No. 466/2012 of the National Health Council.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of the characterization of the FG shows a universe of 7 multiparous women interviewed, with ages ranging from 25 to 45. Of the 7 women in the FG, 5 had incomplete primary education, 1 had incomplete secondary education and only 1 had completed high school and a technical course. With regard to the job market, 1 works as a computer technician, 1 is self-employed and the other 5 women say they are housewives.

From the answers to the guiding question, it was possible to identify that the impossibility of continuing to invest in education and the lack of conditions for paid work, in circumstances of multiparity, was one of the problems most highlighted in the group discussions.

I put my studies aside. (M2)

I gave up work and study. (M6)

Me too, because I got pregnant early, young, and so I had a lot of difficulty because I had no one to keep my son, and I had to choose: either study or keep him. (M1)

For a long time, I stopped going out and put work aside. Those things that a woman should have, we don't have, which is having fun. Because of the children, we work less." (M4)

I used to work looking after a child, but I had to stop because of my pregnancy. (M7)



The individual and 'non-transferable' responsibility of caring for children, combined with the lack of a social structure that offers alternatives for caring without the omnipresence of the mother, results in a situation in which, regardless of personal desire, it is practically impossible to participate in any type of investment or activity that does not involve the children (PITILIN, 2014).

With regard to female schooling, it is considered, among other things, to be a socioeconomic determinant of fertility. With specific regard to the women who took part in the research, it can be argued that schooling is associated with a whole network of factors, already mentioned above, which contribute to limiting women's potential for autonomy in living according to their life plans, especially in the context of reproduction and contraception. These women's low level of schooling (most of them only have primary schooling) reduces their chances of inclusion and participation in society, increasing their social vulnerabilities (BENATTI, 2020).

Another problem brought up in discussions as a negative repercussion of multiparity on women's integration into society is the lack of conditions for paid work. Without being able to work, women no longer contribute to the family income, which is a problem for those who have many children to support.

In this sense, considering that she is the mother of several children, it is difficult, in the midst of the multiple and varied needs of the children, to prioritize or satisfy her own. Motherhood seems to be very important in her life, something that is even above the value of her own needs or desires, such as the deprivation of making plans for personal leisure (RIBEIRO, 2019).

I stopped going out, didn't I? Having fun. Now you have to look after your children, right? Because when you have children, you have to put aside what you like doing, like going out or enjoying something. (M3)

I stopped enjoying it. Because I'm 31 and I could still enjoy it a lot. I had children early, when I was 16 I had my first child. Then I couldn't enjoy life at all." (M5)

5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The repercussions of multiparity are of an individual and social nature and range from a lack of power to take care of oneself (in which, among other situations, the lack of opportunity for leisure activities was mentioned) to problems with schooling and work.

Motherhood in itself brings with it limitations that affect women's lives, especially in the case of the research participants, who have three children or more, these limitations are multiplied. It is therefore feasible to argue that these women's lack of power to manage their lives and satisfy their most particular and specific demands has a significant impact on their health.



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