

Childbirth study needs input from first-time mothers

How does childbirth effect women? Catherine Nobbs-Pryor wants to know. She already has some idea. The mother of a four-year-old son and a psychological researcher, she is conducting a major study now in its third year.

In addition to the extra responsibility of nurturing a baby, first-time mothers experience emotional and physical changes, changes that are overlooked by health care professionals, says Ms. Nobbs-Pryor.

"I believe that instead of telling new mothers what they should be thinking and experiencing, we need to listen to them." She is interested in speaking to about 60 first-time mothers with children 1 to 3 years in the Oakville, Milton and Mississauga areas about some of the longterm changes they have experienced.

women say, they possess a wealth of knowledge. Right now, women don't have a place to discuss their concerns," said Ms. Nobbs-Pryor, indicating she will conduct "relaxed interviews" at their homes.

Most of the available research on the longterm postpartum effects "approaches the medical or psychological viewpoint, and does not look at the physical changes that influence behavior and emotions." Ms. Nobbs-Pryor explained her study will be an integration of both physiological and psychological changes.

Physical changes

Based on interviews she has already conducted with 12 women for her pilot project, and having worked with mothers and young children for a number of years, Ms. Nobbs-Pryor has found first-time mothers ex-

perience differences in sleep patterns, body weight, appearance, self-image and confidence.

A lot of first-time mothers are unprepared for the emotional and physical changes, in addition to having to renegotiate their roles within their marriages to share the care of the child. "Many do not anticipate the full impact of childbirth on themselves," said Ms. Nobbs-Pryor. "Some are very surprised at the longterm physical changes in their sleep patterns, and changes in the size of their feet and hands. For some, the rib cage size changes so their clothes no longer fit, even after returning to their former weight."

Their feelings towards motherhood and parenting need to be assessed, Ms. Nobbs-Pryor says. The additional responsibility of having a baby plus the prevailing attitude among health

care professionals that she should know what to do can result in first-time mothers feeling they've lost control over their situations.

"They have no training and no experience. I joined a parenting group shortly after my son was born. I needed the support," she said, noting her needs were not of a medical nature.

Need for care

"Pre-natal care does not prepare you for the experiences you can expect afterwards. A concern of many first-time mothers is that they have nothing to relate to, and that they are expected to know what to do, based on health professionals telling them "you should know, thousands of women have done it before you." They need some continuity of care.

"Women expect to experience physiological and psychological changes during pregnancy, but how many are taken aback when they don't return to their former selves many months or even years after their child is born?" she asks.

"Many of the mothers themselves are only too well aware of these changes. In contrast, health care professionals still do not appreciate their significance and therefore tend to disregard them."

Pointing out some of the changes first-time mothers experience are common and normal, Ms. Nobbs-Pryor is adamant about the need for information and care. "Women have the right to be informed about the changes following childbirth; this would make this important transition easier and reduce the likelihood of more serious problems from developing."

Relationships

The study will also look at the first-time mothers' relationships with others — family members, co-workers and employers. The search for suitable daycare is a challenge for women working outside the home. "Many don't realize how stressful making child care arrangements can



Catherine Nobbs-Pryor

be. It has to be negotiated into her day, and finding suitable care is difficult."

Then there is the question of whether she should stay home or continue working. "Many women have gone back to work and feel they should stay home, while others have stayed home and feel they must go to work." Ms. Nobbs-Pryor said her pilot study was done entirely with working women. "Some of them may have been home all day, but they worked evenings and weekends.

"Professional women feel their careers are held back, and that their priority obligation is to the home. There are a lot of mixed feelings about this."

Ms. Nobbs-Pryor works in the Psychology department at Chedoke-McMaster Hospitals in Hamilton and is in private practice with Pryor, Lindon and Associates, clinical and educational psychologists in Oakville. The study will serve two purposes, one to determine the longterm needs of first-time mothers, and second to complete a doctoral thesis for the University of Wales in Britain. She can be reached at 849-4545 during business hours.

Halton's garbage export needs may require environmental hearing

By NORM NELSON

Time is running out on Halton Region's garbage disposal problem.

Without a dump of its own, the region ships most of its garbage to two sites — the Niagara Waste Systems landfill in Thorold and the Occidental Petroleum energy from waste plant in Niagara Falls, New York.

Halton's shipments to Occidental peaked at 105,200 tonnes in 1986 with 86,320 tonnes expected to be delivered this year. Shipments there, however, are limited due to operational problems and increased

demand for disposal by U.S. cities.

Niagara Waste Systems, on the other hand, has a limit on the amount of Halton's garbage it can take — 230,000 tonnes in total, with a maximum 85,000 tonnes per year. And due to unforeseen factors, such as the closure of a landfill near Dundas that Halton was using, the quota is being filled faster than anticipated.

A report to be presented by planning and public works commissioner Bob Moore to council today indicates that the total tonnage to Niagara Waste Systems will likely be reached "by the end of June, 1990."

While the Ministry of Environment approved an emergency request by Niagara Waste Systems to exceed the 85,000 tonne quota of waste from Halton this year, it did not approve any increase in the total 230,000 tonne quota.

In a letter to Niagara Waste Systems, the environment ministry stated that, "the timing for Halton's new site to be operational (at a proposed site in Milton) is a minimum of 18 months, depending on factors such as the outcome of legal challenges."

It advised the company to prepare for an Environmental Assessment Act hearing to allow "the continued disposal of waste from (Halton) beyond April, 1990."

The town of Milton, a citizens group opposing the Milton landfill choice and Mississauga-based National Sewer Pipe have launched court appeals against the proposed landfill site. The appeals are expected to be heard in January.

Mr. Moore, in his report, states that Halton Region has requested Niagara Waste Systems prepare for an Environmental Assessment hearing, but added, "we will also be continuing discussions with ministry staff with regard to the reconsideration of their position regarding the need for such a hearing."

Road block resistance . . .

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said "the reasons given (for closure) were exaggerated."

Bob Edmondson, assistant general manager of the Halton Region Conservation Authority, pushed for the closure. The authority owns property nearby and is worried about potential liability should an injury occur.

John Van Eden, who said he has lived in the area for 25 years, wanted it left open. He called the proposed closure "totally unacceptable," given the use the road gets. He also hinted that if it was closed, he would want the 20-foot property strip back taken as a road allowance during the 1870s.

Councillor Bruce Attenborough, who represents the area and had initially wanted the closure, withdrew that support. "I don't see any advantage. Where are the people that signed the petition? They don't seem interested in pursuing the matter."

Town clerk Bill Roberts said all those who signed the petition were notified of the meeting. None of them appeared Monday. The staff proposal died when Mr. Attenborough withdrew his name from the motion because no one would second it. The spectators burst into applause.

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