

# Perception of Privacy in Perinatal Services

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**Objective:** To explore the perceptions of privacy in women receiving perinatal services. It was designed as phenomenological research and conducted within the years 2010-2013 in a maternity and children's hospital in İstanbul, with the necessary permissions.

**Methods:** The study was carried out with 20 women (4 primiparous, 4 multiparous pregnant women and 4 primiparous, 8 multiparous mothers, and 15 health care professionals).

**Results:** The participants think privacy as personal and not limited to the body. They don't wish their bodies to be seen by others, and even they don't wish their husbands to watch them during the labor process. They feel uncomfortable about the number and behaviours of health care professionals in physical examination settings and think that clinics and patients' rooms are crowded and unsafe places for protection of privacy. Some of the participants expressed that privacy is a spiritual value and culture plays a key role in perceptions about privacy, they prefer female doctors, don't want to discuss sexual issues and believe that some of their personal information is shared among health care professionals without their consent. They expect the relevant institutions to improve their physical environments, improve standards about patients' rights and be attentive about the confidentiality of information and documents. Patients' privacy and confidentiality in perinatal healthcare is an important issue that has been unrecognized so far but shouldn't be ignored.

**Conclusion:** Both patients and health care professionals have awareness about the issue and further research is needed.

**Key words:** Perinatal nursing, privacy, confidentiality, personal space