

National
Organization of
Mothers
Of
Twins
Clubs, Inc.

SUBJECT: **MEDICAL SURVEY--Support from Health Care
Providers (Prenatal--Postpartum)**

RESEARCHER: National Organization of Mothers of Twins Clubs, Inc.

DATE:

1990

PURPOSE: By answering the questions on this survey, the Research Department was able to ascertain if the needs of mothers of multiple birth children was being met adequately by the medical community.

METHOD: This interorganizational survey was completed by Mothers of Multiples. The responses represented all twin types. Seventy-eight percent (78%) of those answering had multiples between the ages of 0-5 years; 11% had multiples above the age of 10 years. The same consisted of 2,498 surveys, of which 2,404 were usable for tabulation. The survey was divided into eight sections.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

I. DIAGNOSIS:

- A. 80% of mothers knew they were expecting multiples by the end of their second trimester
--12 mothers found out about multiples during delivery
- B. 85% of mothers had an ultrasound to diagnose multiples
- C. 30% of mothers suspected multiples before their doctor
- D. 17% of mothers had to convince their doctor to look for multiples

II. PREGNANCY:

- A. 66% of doctors considered respondent's multiple pregnancy to be high risk
 1. 72% of doctors required extra prenatal visits
 2. 58% of doctors ordered bedrest by the third trimester
 3. 56% of mothers had no complications during their pregnancy
 4. 43% of mothers had some type of complication
 5. 26% of respondents noted bedrest was not suggested
- B. 22% of mothers felt pregnancy was the source of stress and anxiety
 1. 53% felt mild anxiety
 2. 16% felt no excess anxiety
- C. 63% of mothers who experienced previous pregnancies felt the multiple pregnancy was more difficult
- D. 87% of mothers asked questions and felt they received adequate answers from their health care provider
- E. 60% of mothers stated their doctor was the "Professional Person" most helpful during pregnancy while 5% replied that NONE were helpful
- F. 57% of mothers took birth preparation classes
--70% of those women felt information on multiple births was inadequate

III. PREMATUREITY:

- A. 69% of multiple births occurred 1 to 8 weeks before due date
1. 12% were delivered less than 1 week early
 2. 23% were delivered 1 to 2 weeks early
 3. 26% were delivered 3 to 4 weeks early
 4. 20% were delivered 5 to 8 weeks early
 5. 5% were delivered more than 9 weeks early
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- B. 60% of mothers had at least one multiple placed in Neonatal Intensive Care Unit
1. 85% of those mothers had no trouble bonding with their premature multiple
 2. 89% of those mothers were allowed involvement in the daily care of their premature multiple
- C. 58% of mothers felt their health care provider helped them deal with the emotions associated with prematurity of multiple birth infants
1. 42% needed additional support
 2. 78% reported hospital staff gave them adequate support
 3. 62% had the benefit of NICU support groups
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IV. DELIVERY:

- A. Caesarean Section Delivery
1. 56% of mothers delivered multiples by caesarean section
 - 3% of those mothers had a combination vaginal and caesarean section delivery
 2. 79% of mothers felt adequately informed about caesarean section deliveries
- B. Zygoty
- 60% of mothers were adequately informed of multiples zygoty
- 53% were informed by their doctor
 - 9% were informed by nurse or other staff member
- C. Professional Person most helpful during multiple birth delivery
1. 41% stated doctor most helpful
 2. 29% stated nurse most helpful
 3. 10% stated other - anesthetist, midwife, etc. most helpful
- D. Birth Defects
1. 6% of mothers reported birth defect occurred in multiple births
 - 54% of those women felt the health care professional did not help them deal with the emotions associated with birth defects of infants

V. POSTPARTUM:

- A. 47% of respondents experienced some form of postpartum "blues"
1. 95% of those respondents didn't require professional help to overcome feelings
 2. 50% of those respondents were not informed of possibility of this occurring

VI. LOSS OF A MULTIPLE:

- A. 2% of the respondents suffered loss of multiple(s) during pregnancy, delivery, or shortly after birth
1. 80% of those mothers had no special counseling to deal with their loss
 2. 61% of mothers were encouraged to see/touch the baby(ies)
 3. 45% of mothers were encouraged to take pictures
- B. 36% of mothers felt the most comforting support was family and friends
1. 17% of those mothers sought comfort from mothers of twins with similar loss
 2. 4% of those mothers sought comfort from clergy and books
 3. 28% of those mothers sought elsewhere for comfort

VII. EARLY CARE OF MULTIPLES:

- A. 42% of mothers received information or training on early care of multiples
1. 80% of those mothers received information on safety precautions dealing specifically with multiples
 2. 41% of those mothers were advised to keep a diary recording such things as feedings, bowel movements, etc.
- B. 76% of mothers felt doctors were supportive of breastfeeding
26% of mothers were given no information from doctors concerning breastfeeding multiples
- 6% received information from doctors
 - 9% utilized LaLeche League support groups
 - 13% learned from books
 - 13% taught themselves
 - 21% received information from nurses
- C. 21% of mothers felt doctors were the most helpful "Professional Person" in answering questions about early care of multiples
--44% felt there were NO "Professional Persons" who were helpful

VIII. WHERE TO TURN FOR HELP:

- A. Doctor
1. 83% of mothers acquired a list of books about pregnancy, delivery or care of multiples from their doctors
 2. 30% of mothers were informed about existence of support groups
 3. 56% of mothers felt they were well informed on what to expect with multiples
- B. Major source of multiple information
1. 44% acquired from books
 2. 23% received information from Mothers of Twins Clubs
 3. 16% received information from doctors

- C. 23% above mentioned information received from MOTC
 - 1. 33% were told of existence by family or friend
 - 2. 17% were told of existence by their doctor
 - 3. 12% saw an advertisement of a local MOTC
 - 4. 11% were approached in public

CONCLUSION:

- 1. Distribute more information to women expecting multiples BEFORE multiples are born.
- 2. Distribute most needed information in regard to early care of multiples.
- 3. Many expressed feelings of being overwhelmed and totally unprepared for early care of multiples. This occurred at the time when they needed help the most!
- 4. Postpartum "blues" were very common.
- 5. Best advice came from other mothers of multiples.

Many interesting comments were written by members. These will appear in the article "Survey Comments" in a future issue of *MOTC's Notebook*.