

Addressing Multifaceted Psychosocial Challenges in the Setting of Recurrent Preterm Births: A Case Report

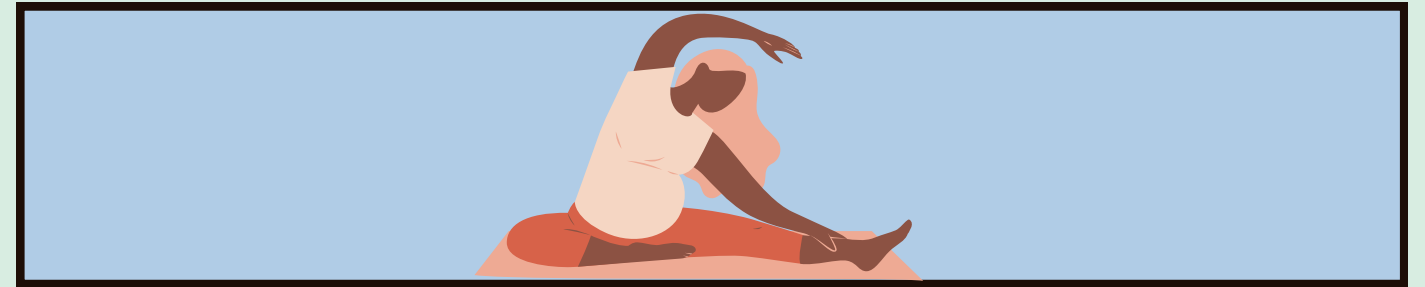
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Introduction: Preterm birth is a significant public health concern associated with adverse maternal and neonatal outcomes. Recurrent preterm births pose particular challenges, impacting both physical and psychosocial wellbeing. This case report delves into the multifaceted psychosocial dimensions encountered by a 35-year-old multiparous woman experiencing recurrent preterm births necessitating emergency interventions. By examining the complexities of her obstetric history and the challenges she faced during her most recent pregnancy, this report aims to shed light on the urgent need for comprehensive psychosocial interventions tailored to address the unique needs of women navigating recurrent preterm births.

Case Summary: The patient, a 35-year-old multiparous woman, experienced recurrent previous preterm births, including two vaginal deliveries and one lower segment caesarean section between 31 and 36 weeks' gestation. All deliveries were conducted at different tertiary hospitals due to neonatal intensive care unit availability at the time of her presentations to the rural base hospital where she was booked each time. Despite her familiarity with obstetric interventions, her fourth pregnancy presented unforeseen challenges, culminating in an emergency Classical Caesarean section at 24 weeks gestation due to placental abruption. The gravity of birthing at an early gestational age and the complexities of a Classical Caesarean contributed to profound physical and emotional hurdles during her recovery. Furthermore, the geographical remoteness of her residence deprived her of social and familial support networks and obstetric continuity of care, during critical periods, exacerbating the psychosocial impact of her pregnancy complications.

Results: What Was Done Well

- 1. Counselling and Peer Support:** The patient received counselling and engaged in peer support groups, which played a crucial role in addressing emotional distress and promoting resilience postpartum.
- 2. Comprehensive Antenatal Care:** Despite challenges, the patient accessed antenatal care, allowing for early identification of risks and timely interventions.
- 3. Healthcare Provider Collaboration:** There was multidisciplinary collaboration between obstetricians, mental health professionals, and social workers, highlighting a holistic approach to care.
- 4. Awareness of Psychosocial Impact:** The healthcare team recognised the profound psychosocial impact of recurrent preterm births and made efforts to address these challenges.



Discussion: Research surrounding the investigation and management of recurrent preterm births underscores the importance of comprehensive antenatal care, early identification of risk factors, and multidisciplinary collaboration. Psychosocial interventions, including psychological counselling, peer support, and access to community resources, play a crucial role in addressing the emotional toll of recurrent preterm births on women and their families. Current literature also highlights the association between psychosocial stressors and adverse pregnancy outcomes, emphasising the need for tailored support strategies to mitigate the impact of stress on maternal and neonatal health.

Results: Challenges Identified

- 1. Geographical Barriers:** The patient faced significant challenges due to geographical remoteness, leading to limited access to specialised care and social support networks during delivery and immediately postpartum.
- 2. Continuity of Care:** The patient did not experience consistent obstetric continuity of care, which could have contributed to fragmented support during critical periods.
- 3. Tailored Interventions:** While counselling and peer support were beneficial, further tailored interventions addressing specific psychosocial needs could have been explored.



8 Key Considerations For Healthcare Professionals When Looking After Women with Recurrent Preterm Births

1. Emotional Impact
2. Stress & Coping
3. Partner & Family Dynamics
4. Impact on Parenting & Sibling Relationships
5. Social Support & Isolation
6. Healthcare Communications & Trust
7. Postpartum Mental Health
8. Resilience & Adaptation

Recommendations

- 1. Telemedicine Solutions:** Explore innovative telemedicine solutions to enhance access to mental health, familial and community support systems for women transferred away from their rural residence, and to enhance access to specialised care and support antenatally.
- 2. Care Coordination:** Ensure continuity of care by establishing healthcare communication across different healthcare settings.
- 3. Enhanced Psychosocial Assessment:** Conduct comprehensive psychosocial assessments to identify specific needs and tailor interventions accordingly.
- 4. Community Engagement:** Foster community partnerships to expand support networks and resources for women experiencing recurrent preterm births.

Key Takeaways

- Recognise the multifaceted impact of recurrent preterm births on maternal wellbeing.
- Advocate for comprehensive antenatal care and early psychosocial interventions in women who have experienced multiple preterm births previously.
- Emphasise the importance of addressing geographical barriers to continuity of care.

