

# CONFIDENCE IN LABOR

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**Purpose:** The purpose of this pilot study was to describe duration of labor and satisfaction with the labor experience with different levels of attention from a birthing attendant.

**Method:** Thirty-five mothers in labor were interviewed in the postpartum recovery period to ascertain their satisfaction with the birth experience. The mothers were asked open-ended questions that began with: "How would you describe your birthing experience?" The data were grouped by those mothers who had a one-to-one birthing attendant and those who had standard care from multiple caregivers.

**Findings:** Women who had one-on-one nursing/midwifery care experienced shorter labors and expressed higher levels of satisfaction with their birthing experience. They attributed their satisfaction to the motivation from the support they received in labor that gave them confidence to deal with the challenges they faced. Twenty of the births occurred in a small hospital/birthing center and 30% of the women had oxytocin augmentation. All these women received one-on-one care from a nurse or midwife. The average length of labor for primigravida women was 9.1 hours and for multiparous women was 6.0 hours. Eighty-five percent of the women rated their care as outstanding. Fifteen women received care at a larger tertiary care hospital where midwives attended the women, but the nursing care was not one-on-one. Thirty-three percent of these women received oxytocin augmentation. The average length of labor for primigravida women was 6.8 hours and multiparous women were 6.8 hours. Forty-seven percent of these women rated their care as outstanding.

**Discussion:** A recurring theme among those women, both primigravidas and multiparas, who rated their care as outstanding at both facilities was the motivation received and the confidence they gained from the nurses and midwives who attended them during labor. These women expressed increased confidence throughout their labor as a result of the encouragement and support they received. This theme is confirmed by previous research that has found that confidence is a significant variable in women's perceptions of their birth experience and that confidence may be increased by support during labor. (Lowe, 1991).

