



I36 Awareness and Attitudes of Health Care Professionals in Unperceived Pregnancies

Oktaý Cavus, MSc, Üsküdar University, İstanbul 34430, TURKEY; İnci Y. Tezbasan, BSc, Uskudar University, İstanbul 34662, TURKEY; Gokben Sayar, PhD, Uskudar University, İstanbul 34662, TURKEY; Sevil Atasoy, PhD, Uskudar Üniversitesi Adli Bilimler Enstitüsü, İstanbul, TURKEY*

Learning Overview: The goal of this presentation is to determine the level of awareness and attitudes of health care workers regarding unperceived pregnancies.

Impact on the Forensic Science Community: This presentation will impact the forensic science community by showing the importance of better training regarding pregnancy for first responders, health care professionals, and teenagers.

Unperceived pregnancy is a phenomenon in which the expectant mother is unaware of her pregnancy despite its advanced stage. The expectant mother becomes aware of her pregnancy either at 20-weeks gestation or later. While the identification of the pregnancy at 20-weeks gestation is defined as “partially unperceived pregnancy,” the identification of the pregnancy just before the birth or during labor is defined as “total unperceived pregnancy.”

This study sought to determine the level of awareness and attitudes of health care workers regarding unperceived pregnancies. A sociodemographic form and awareness and attitude questionnaire were used as data collection tools in the research. In this questionnaire prepared by the researchers, two clinical vignettes were given and the participants’ views about the table were asked after each clinical vignette. The study group consisted of 240 people with a mean age of 31.3 years and a standard deviation of 8.3. When the participants were examined according to their occupation, it was observed that 71.2% were psychologists, 16.2% were psychiatrists, and 12.5% belonged to other health services. The results of this study suggest that the psychologists, psychiatrists, and other health workers who participated in the research were indecisive to the vignettes that define unperceived pregnancies and that they had difficulty in recognizing and interpreting the clinical situation.

Thinking that the clinical situation may be associated with concealed pregnancy, psychosis, or mental retardation due to a clinical mental disorder, not knowing pregnancy signs and that the situation may be explained by inexperience, that it may be due to negligence and irresponsibility, that it may be the unconscious denial of an unwanted pregnancy, or that the woman was not aware of her reproductive capacity were all considered in close proximity. The fact that one-fourth to one-third of the participants were indecisive for each question shows the confusion the table created. The most important step to take for the early detection of unperceived pregnancies, in order for the mother candidate to have appropriate pregnancy follow-up and psychological support, for the birth and growth of the newborn to be physically and psychological healthy, and in order to prevent the forensic problems and familial crises that unperceived pregnancies would create, is to raise awareness about the unperceived pregnancies for, first, the health care personnel and then for society.

Unperceived Pregnancy, Health Care Professionals, Awareness