

# ANNUAL NURSING CONGRESS: THE ART OF CARE

November 12-13, 2018 Istanbul, Turkey

## Women's views and experiences of continuous support during childbirth: A meta-synthesis

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Despite the known benefits of continuous support during childbirth, the practice is still not routinely implemented in all maternity settings and women's perspectives might not be considered. This study aimed to provide midwives and other healthcare professionals with summaries of best available research evidence on women's views and experiences regarding continuous support during childbirth. The review question was, what were the views and experiences of women regarding continuous support during childbirth as reported in qualitative studies and in studies that adopted mixed research methods with a qualitative component that used semi-structured, in-depth or focus group interviews or case studies? A detailed search was done on electronic data bases, EBSCOhost: Medline, PsychINFO, SocINDEX, OALster, Scopus, SciELO, Science Direct, PubMed and Google Scholar. The data bases were searched for available literature using a predetermined search strategy. Reference lists of included studies were also searched. Predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied during the selection of eligible sources. In total, 12 studies were included in the data analysis and synthesis. Two categories were identified namely, the role and attributes of the support persons and challenging aspects regarding continuous support during childbirth. Women's perspectives about continuous support during childbirth were influenced by culture, traditions and values, relationships with specific support persons as well as institutional practices, forms of supportive care received and the attributes of the support person. Continuous support during childbirth was valued by most women. Health care institutions should include continuous support during childbirth in their policies and guidelines and birth plans.

### Biography

Karin Minnie is the director of NuMIQ and professor with the School of Nursing Science at the North-West University in South Africa. She has supervised 26 postgraduate students and published 16 articles in peer reviewed journals and 6 chapters in academic books.

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