Assignment 1: Conference Abstract and Reference List

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Word Count: 250

Unit Convener: Kai Hodgkin

Unit: Continuity Midwifery B (11303), S2, 2021

**“Let’s Talk About Sex”**

In this policy presentation I will discuss the implementation of a Sexual Function pathway within ACT maternity services. Sexual health care is considered to be well within midwifery scope of practice, with the Australian College of Midwives stating midwives provide sexual or reproductive health care. Despite this, it continues to be an aspect of care that is heavily overlooked. Whether it be an insufficiency in midwifery knowledge, or an inadequacy in resources, sexual health care within midwifery fails to be prioritised, and women have poorer outcomes for it.

I am proposing a screening tool to be used in the antenatal and postnatal settings of The Centenary Hospital for Women and Children. Based off of the “Female Sexual Function Index” by Rosen and colleagues in 2005, this tool is designed to screen women for sexual dysfunction and dissatisfaction, start conversations around sexual health during pregnancy and after birth, and prompt accurate referrals. The tool uses six domains to assess function; desire, arousal, lubrication, orgasm, satisfaction, and pain. These domains represent the key aspects of sexual function, and are replicative of the multidimensional nature of a woman’s sexuality. When a woman is identified as high risk for sexual dysfunction and/or dissatisfaction, a referral pathway is to be followed. Staff in-service training is at the forefront of the implementation strategy, as well as a bi-annual review process, collecting data from midwives, women, and other participating health professionals. Women deserve adequate sexual health education and care from their midwives, so let’s talk about sex.

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