

**THE EXPERIENCES OF WOMEN WHO HAD INTRA-UTERINE FETAL DEATH IN VHEMBE DISTRICT OF
LIMPOPO PROVINCE OF SOUTH AFRICA**

By

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ABSTRACT

Globally, intrauterine fetal death (IUFD) is a common problem in obstetric nursing science practice and leads to substantial grief reaction with a wide variety of emotions on a grieving woman. The significance of pregnancy and consequences of IUFD differs depending on personal and cultural values.

This study sought to investigate the experiences of women to the loss of the baby and the care that they received from the health professionals before, during and after IUFD in the Vhembe District Limpopo Province of South Africa.

A qualitative, descriptive, explorative and contextual design was used to explore and describe the emotional experiences of women. The study population are women above 18 years who have experienced an IUFD during the year from January 2015 to December 2015. Eight Venda speaking women were sampled through non-random, purposive sampling method. Permission was sought and granted from the University of Venda Higher degrees and Ethics Committee, the Limpopo Province Department of Health, Selected Hospitals Ethics and Research Committees and participants.

Data was collected through in depth individual interviews, recorded using an audio tape recorder and analysed through eight steps as outlined in Tesch open coding method. The results revealed that women had emotional experiences to the loss and the care they received before labour, during delivery and after delivery. Three themes with categories and sub- categories emerged from the analysed data, namely, experiences before labour, during delivery and after delivery.

The study recommends for practice before labour, during delivery and after delivery. Furthermore, an investigation of the experiences of health professionals when caring for a woman who has IUFD.

Keywords: Intrauterine death, Experiences, Health professionals