A Qualitative Study of Mothers with Addiction
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Introduction
- This case study report is one participant from a larger study consisting of 11 mothers recovering from opioid dependence.
- Opioid use dependency in pregnant women has more than doubled between 1998 and 2011.
- 50 to 80% of opioid-exposed infants will go through withdrawal symptoms upon birth.
- The focus of the study is to understand the maternal experience of substance exposure during pregnancy and raising a family, to better inform service delivery to affected families.

Methods
- Exempt IRB approved through Clemson University.
- Qualitative descriptive study.
- Recruitment by posters and snowball sampling.
- Story method data collection was used as the mother anonymously called a designated cell phone.
- Students listened to the phone call, transcribed the call, then coded key themes using Atlas.ti transcription software.
- Literature review was done on emerging key themes identified by the researchers.

Results

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<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Quotes</th>
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<tr>
<td>Religion (Individual)°</td>
<td>“It’s about having a spiritual relationship and that’s the only thing that will fill that void addiction gives... God is the only thing I found that can fill that void”</td>
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<td>Physical environment ( Macrosystem)°</td>
<td>“You have to get away from it... I mean the same people the same places the same things I mean you’re gonna be doing the same things.”</td>
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<td>Social environment ( Mesosystem)°</td>
<td>“…one addiction feeds of the other…” “…I started hanging out with a bad crowd and got really bad off…”</td>
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<td>Significant other ( Microsystem)°</td>
<td>“I was really wanting to get high and he was like me too and... that started it back again” “I just wanted to give her dad the chance to be a dad... I feel like I put my relationship above my pregnancy here... and maybe that wasn’t the right thing to do.”</td>
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<td>Seeing sober change (Individual)°</td>
<td>“…whenever you get sober you actually worry about... doing all this other stuff that you didn’t necessarily care to do while you were using.” “...they would’ve been there...had I been making the right efforts...”</td>
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<td>Concern about past actions impacting baby (Individual)°</td>
<td>“…I don’t wanna say I’m worried about [what I did while pregnant], but... I’m definitely unsure because... you know they’re unsure. There’s not any evidence or research or anything [about what happens]”</td>
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Discussion
This mother’s strongest theme focused on the role of others in her life. Her family, boyfriend, and physical environment all played a role in her sobriety. One study found 50% of adolescents reported starting use due to a peer using. Another study found that progress away from addiction was associated with significant changes in social networks. Suggestions for future research include quantitative study on the presence of positive and negative social influences on a mother’s journey to sobriety.

References

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A Qualitative Study of Mothers with Addiction
Emily Shores BS, Rebekah Lannamann

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The purpose of this research study is to better understand the maternal experience of substance exposure during pregnancy and raising a family, to better inform service delivery to affected families. Maternal Opioid Use Disorder increased from 1.5 per 1,000 delivery hospitalizations in 1999 to 6.5 in 2014 (CDC, 2018). In America, 50 to 80 percent of opioid-exposed infants will go through withdrawal symptoms upon birth (Substance, 2018). The theoretical framework uses Boykin and Schoenhofer’s “Nursing as Caring” in relation to the assumption all persons are caring. The stories represent calls for caring (Boykin, 2001). The significant increase in perinatal substance use has created a knowledge gap for how to inform health care services to best support recovery of mothers and their families. The qualitative descriptive study used story method of data collection from mothers who have experienced substance use during pregnancy and raising a family. Mothers were recruited using posters and snowball sampling. Inclusion criteria was 18 years or older, a mother, and dependent on an addictive substance. The mothers anonymously called a designated cell phone and told their stories of addiction. Stories were transcribed and analyzed with the Atlas.ti software program to identify themes. Students performed individual literature reviews on the emerging themes. Exempt IRB was approved through Clemson University. This case study focused on one of the eleven mothers that participated in the parent study. Themes from narrative analysis for this mother include the role of other people in her life. The positive support from her family and God, coupled with negative relationships and social environments that readily provided access to drugs, greatly influenced her sobriety. Based on this research, optimizing the number of positive support systems early on in recovery and minimizing negative social systems facilitates the journey to sobriety. Clinical implications consist of active listening, patience and understanding and avoiding unproductive accusations or blaming. Future research includes additional studies on the presence of positive and negative social influences on recovery.