MAPPING AND UNDERSTANDING MOTHERS' SOCIAL NETWORKS (MUMS): IMPLICATIONS FOR HEALTH WORKFORCE PLANNING

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In NS, Public Health Services provides multiple postpartum programs, particularly to designated priority populations. The changing landscape of social media and social networks, shifting public policies, programs and services, and technologically savvy clients provides a unique opportunity to explore how to care for this generation of mothers.

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PURPOSE/OBJECTIVES

The aim of this research is to examine, understand and formally map how new mothers access support and information during the post-partum period across Nova Scotia on and off-line. This research will provide direction for health care providers to maximize maternal-newborn outcomes through accessible, effective and coordinated post-partum care.

CONCLUSIONS

This study is unique in the use of feminist poststructuralism, discourse analysis and social network mapping to describe how new mothers seek support on and off-line. It is timely given the current restructuring of public health in NS to include more targeted strategies for postpartum support and to explore different ways to work with community partners

FINDINGS/IMPACT/OUTCOMES

The online questionnaire at http://www.mumsns.ca/survey.asp will be accessible until 100 questionnaires have been completed. It includes demographics, structured and open-ended questions. Demographic information will allow targeted recruitment for the focus groups to include mothers not represented in the e-interview. Six focus groups will be conducted in rural and urban settings. An environmental scan will locate freely accessible online forums and Facebook groups where NS women are discussing parenting experiences during the first 6 months postpartum. Online data will be captured using the open source web capture tool Zotero. Approximately twenty blogs, twenty online forums and five Facebook groups will be analysed. Data collected through online questionnaires, focus groups, and social media will be analysed using feminist poststructuralism and discourse analysis. Themes will emerge from the data and be compared across the data sources. We will use the data visualization software Tableau to map the data by region.