

Parents' Experiences about Support Following Stillbirth and Neonatal Death

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Background: Stillbirth and neonatal death are one of the most stressful life events, with negative outcomes for parents. Society does not recognize this type of loss, and parental grieving is particularly complicated and intense. **Purpose:** The aim of this study was to describe and understand the experiences of parents in relation to professional and social support following stillbirth and neonatal death. **Methods:** This was a qualitative study based on Gadamer's hermeneutic phenomenology. Twenty-one semistructured interviews were carried out. Inductive analysis was used to find themes based on the data. **Results:** Twenty-one parents (13 mothers and 8 fathers) from 6 families participated in the study. The analysis identified 2 main themes: (1) "professional care in dealing with parents' grief," with the subthemes "important aspects of professional care," "continuing of pathways of care"; and (2) "effects of social support in parental grief," including the subthemes "the silence that surrounds grieving parents," "family and other children: a key element," and "perinatal loss support groups: a reciprocal help." **Implications for Practice:** Counseling and support according to parents' requirements by an interdisciplinary team of professionals educated in perinatal loss and ethical family-centered care is needed. A social support system for families is necessary to avoid negative emotional consequences. **Implications for Research:** Further research is needed to analyze midwives' and nurses' experience as facilitators to improve parental grief and the difficulties experienced by the family, other children, and friends of parents with perinatal loss in providing support. © 2020 by The National Association of Neonatal Nurses.

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social support

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support group

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