

Fathers In Childbearing Period: A South Asian (Indian) Perspective

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Background: Fathers begin their fatherhood journey during pregnancy and continue throughout parenthood. While fatherhood is associated with positive outcomes for mothers, children, and families, fathers receive less attention in perinatal care settings, nursing courses, and education than mothers and infants. In addition, anxiety and depression levels in fathers have increased four to tenfold since the pandemic (37.1% and 22.9%, respectively) compared to pre-pandemic levels (Cameron et al., 2020). Therefore, it is crucial to address fathers' needs, challenges, and concerns by exploring their subjective experiences since many fail to realize the importance of emotional wellbeing. Canada's South Asian population is 5.6% Indian (Statistics Canada, 2018). The Indian fathers with longstanding cultural traditions and gender-specific norms deserve special attention, especially when there is little encouragement or social support in the immigrant land. As a nursing professional, lactation consultant, and immigrant mother, I draw from my personal and professional experiences to emphasize the importance of involving fathers. This study aims to fill a knowledge gap of Indian fathers' perinatal experiences in Canada and address the silent crisis of fathers' mental health.

Research Questions: 1. What are the experiences and perceptions of fathering in South Asian (Indian) parents, grandparents & health care providers? 2. How are fathering experiences different from the home country to the immigrant country (Canada)? and 3. What are the barriers and available resources for fathers during the childbearing period?

Methods: A qualitative, Straussian grounded theory (1998) approach based on critical realism and intersectionality will examine fathering during childbearing within the intersections of gender, immigration, racialization and culture.

Future Implications: This study will propose a new model of Indian fathering in the Canadian diaspora. This research will add to the existing body of knowledge on fathering and support culture-specific, father-inclusive practices and programs promoting mental health and wellbeing.