Title:
The New Normal: Nonbirth Lesbian Mothers' Experiences of the First Year of Motherhood

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Maternal Health in Adoptive Mothers

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References:


http://www.hrc.org/files/assets/resources/Joint_Adoption_parenting_Laws_April_2011.pdf


Scott, K.E. (2007). Identifying stressors and coping patterns during the donor insemination process with lesbian couples: Implications for health care providers. Unpublished manuscript, Center for Education in Human Sexuality, Widener University, Chester, PA.


The United States Census (2011) reported that 49 percent of lesbian couples are raising children. Homosexuality has become more accepted in mainstream society. Lesbians and gay men currently have more social and legal rights and protections than at any other time in history. These rights are largely dependent upon the geographical location in which one resides. Although the incidence of lesbian motherhood has increased, the partners of biological mothers are not automatically recognized as parents.

The purpose of this study was to develop a metastory of nonbirth lesbian mothers’ experiences of the first year of motherhood. This author employed narrative analysis utilizing Riessman’s (1993;2008) structural approach to thematic analysis to understand nonbirth lesbian mothers’ experiences of the first year of motherhood. Ten nonbirth lesbian mothers were interviewed. Each mother shared a unique story of her first year of motherhood. Themes were individually analyzed within each story. The meta-story revealed six overarching themes including: At the mercy of health care providers, Nursing is the major difference between us, Defined by who I am not, Trying to protect my family: The world can take them away, What’s
in a name?, and Epilogue: The new normal. Stories remained intact within the portrayal of the metastory illustrating the postpartum experiences of nonbirth lesbian mothers.

This study adds valuable insight to clinical nursing practice and nursing scholarship. The perspective of the nonbirth lesbian mother has been virtually absent in the nursing literature. Nonbirth lesbian mothers have significant health disparities. Health care providers can be instrumental in providing more sensitive care to lesbian mothers and their families. Recommendations are made for clinical practice, education, leadership and research. Nursing has historically been silent on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) health issues. This study compels nurses to take a stand on public health issues related to the LGBTQ community.