Manuscript #: 2006/044
Manuscript title: The anniversary of birth trauma: Failure to rescue
Manuscript type: Regular
Number of text pgs.: 17
Number of figures: 0
Number of tables: 0
Reviewer: Donna G. Knauth
Stat reviewer assigned?: No -- do you recommend a stat reviewer? No

Please evaluate the following with these choices: (1) adequate, (2) inadequate (describe in written review) or (3) not appropriate (describe in written review)

Problem statement: 1
Attention to relevant literature: 1
Theoretical framework: Qualitative study - The researcher searched for structure and essential meaning in this lived experience.
Research design: 1 Colaizzi’s method of phenomenology
Data analysis: 1
Discussion of results: 1
Organization: 1
Writing style: 1

Please rate the following topics 1-5 (with 5 being the highest rating):
Value of topic: 5
Probable reader interest in topic: 5
Importance of present contribution to nursing: 5
Priority of topic for publication: 5
Rank this manuscript for its value: 5

Reviewer’s Recommendation (please type “X” after your choice):
Accept with revisions “X”

This study raises awareness of birth trauma and its long-term effects on women, their spouse/partner, children, and extended family, and as such, makes a valuable contribution to the nursing literature.

The manuscript has many positive elements. Suggestions are offered to strengthen the manuscript.

Abstract: A sentence could be added to the background section of the abstract to clarify the negative consequences of birth trauma and thereby emphasize the importance of the study.
**Problem Statement:** The problem and the purpose of the study are clearly stated. The author describes how the problem of post-traumatic stress disorder secondary to childbirth, and even the perception of delivery as a negative experience, can have serious ramifications. Birth trauma is now being recognized and is an important area for nursing research. The purpose of this study was “to describe the essence of women’s experiences regarding the anniversary of their birth trauma.”

**Attention to Relevant Literature:** The three qualitative studies that examined traumatic births secondary to birth trauma are clearly and concisely presented. The first intervention study that is cited needs further clarification (page 4, lines 16-22). Were these mothers at risk of developing psychological trauma symptoms? Did the mothers verbalize that their births had been traumatic? How was the term “unpleasant event” defined? Were the mothers randomly assigned to the groups? What explanation did the researchers give for their findings?

**Research Design:** The author outlines Colaizzi’s method of phenomenology and states that the “final operation begins with the themes developed earlier in the fundamental description.” The researcher reflected on these four themes and has made them clear and explicit. In Colaizzi’s method, however, themes are then grouped into clusters and clusters are grouped into categories. It is not clear why the author has not done this.

Although interviewing is the selected strategy for generating data in Colaizzi’s interpretation of the phenomenological method, the researcher in this study asked women to describe their stories in writing and return them over the internet. The researcher has presumed that the participants in this study were able to express their lived experience by writing descriptions. Colaizzi often found it necessary to conduct lengthy and repeated interviews to facilitate the participants’ descriptions of their experiences. Did the researcher find it necessary for additional contact with the participants?

**Data Analysis:** The identified themes and relevant quotations provide a clear picture of how the themes emerged from the data. The labels given to the themes capture an insightful construct. The findings are believable and important.

The author addresses efforts to enhance the trustworthiness of the data through member checks, use of “Hycner’s suggestion of listing for each theme its subsumed significant statements and their original numeration,” and using participants from five different countries. Additional information would provide further evidence of the data trustworthiness. Was peer debriefing or any type of triangulation used? Which techniques were used for confirmability?

**Discussion of Results:** The author adequately describes the essence of the phenomenon, the anniversary of birth trauma. However, clarification is needed to show how “failure to rescue” is linked to the themes. Based on Colaizzi’s process of analysis, does “failure to rescue” represent a category? As it is written, it appears as just a peripheral thought. A figure that illustrates the inductive ordering of the data from the concrete themes to the more abstract clusters and the category may add clarity for the reader.
The author has addressed an important gap in nursing knowledge and makes a valuable contribution to nursing literature. Minimal research has been done on birth trauma. Implications of the study findings for future research and application to practice are needed. The knowledge generated in this phenomenological study increases understanding of birth trauma, the consequences of which are often ignored by health care professionals. The descriptions of the phenomenon as reported in the women's quotations identify factors that contribute to the development of birth trauma. These findings can constructively guide nursing practice in preventing birth trauma. In the current high-tech labor and delivery environment, health care professionals focus primarily on physical care of the laboring mother and her infant and on technological tasks. Knowledge generated in this study emphasizes the critical importance of addressing both the vital psychosocial needs as well as the physical needs of the women during birth.

**Organization:** Well-organized.

p. 3, line 8 – add Wolf to reference.
p.10, line 5 – should this be “his” BIRTHDAY or “hers”
p.11, line 16 – should this be hypoglycemia?

**Writing style:** Clear writing style.