COUVADE SYNDROME

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ABSTRACT

The term couvade was first used by the anthropologist E. B. Tylor in 1865 It describe certain father-hood rituals performed by husbands while their wives were giving birth. In some cultures the expectant father avoids eating certain foods or handling knives or other sharp tools while the mother is in labor. In Papua New Guinea the father builds a hut apart from the rest of the village and goes to bed when his wife s childbirth begins. He then stays in bed and imitates the pains of childbirth until the baby is born. A similar custom is observed among the Basques.

Psychosomatic Refers to physical symptoms that are significantly influenced by emotional factors. Doctors regard couvade syndrome as a psychosomatic condition.

KEYWORDS: Couvade Syndromebency Abraham, Clinical Instructor

INTRODUCTION

Definition

Couvade syndrome can also be called as pregnant dad syndrome or, male pregnancy experience," which is also known as sympathetic pregnancy, in this condition father-to-be experiences the physical symptoms of pregnancy before the baby birth. The word couvade is from the French verb couver, it is "to brood", a bird protecting its eggs before they hatch.

Couvade rituals are thought to have a number of possible purposes, depending on the specific culture:

- It shows that the man is the child's biological father.
- It draws the attention of evil spirits away from the mother to the father.
- It strengthens the emotional bond between father and child.
- It relieves the father's anxiety while the mother is in labor.
- To strengthen the father's relationship with supernatural beings so that he can guide the child into the world.

Ritual couvade is no longer observed in developed countries, but the term couvade syndrome has been applied to the physical symptoms that many men in these countries experience during a wife's pregnancy, ranging from mild nausea or backaches to weight gain or toothache. It is thought that more men in Western societies experience couvade syndrome in the early 2000s than was the case with previous generations of fathers, due in part to changes in men involvement with the birthing process. Some doctors think that the participation of fathers in the delivery room as "coaches" or comforters is one reason for the increased number of men who develop pregnancy symptoms.
CAUSES

Several different types of explanation have been proposed for couvade syndrome:

- It is a psychiatric disorder. This type of explanation is more common among European than American physicians. Some attribute the symptoms of couvade syndrome to jealousy of the woman’s ability to give birth, while others maintain that they result from male guilt over impregnating the woman or to sibling rivalry—that is, the husband regards the wife as a competitor that he must try to outperform.

- It results from real biological changes in the expectant father’s body. A team of Canadian researchers reported that their sample of expectant fathers had higher levels of estradiol (a female hormone) and lower levels of testosterone (a male sex hormone) in their saliva and blood than a control group of childless men. It is a reaction to a changed social role; that is, the syndrome is one way that some men "work through" their feelings about assuming the social expectations and responsibilities associated with fatherhood. A set of psychosomatic symptoms that is within the range of normal experience and does not indicate mental illness. Psychosomatic refers to physical symptoms that are caused or influenced by emotional factors, such as stress headaches or "butterflies in the stomach" before an examination.

COUVADE CONTRIBUTORS

- A physical expression of anxiety over the birth
- Sympathy or empathy with the mother
- An assertion of paternity
- Jealousy at the mother’s ability to carry a child and her birth experience

SYMPTOMS

Expectant fathers may experience one or more of the follow:

- Nosebleeds, weight gain, nausea, vomiting, constipation, diarrhea, loss of appetite, itchy skin, stomach cramps, headaches, toothache, sleep disturbances, food cravings, Symptoms experienced by the partner can include stomach pain, back pain, indigestion, changes in appetite, acne, breast augmentation, hardening of the nipple, and insomnia.

DIAGNOSIS

Couvade syndrome is not listed as a diagnostic category in the most recent editions of the American Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, fourth edition, text revision (2000) or the World Health Organization's International Classification of Diseases, version 10 (1993). In addition, it is not described or discussed in most medical textbooks, although a few handbooks for doctors in family practice mention it in passing as a condition of unknown origin. Since most men with couvade syndrome have only mild symptoms, they are unlikely to consult a doctor about the condition by itself.

TREATMENT

There is no standard mainstream treatment recommended for couvade syndrome because it is not usually
mentioned in medical textbooks. Anecdotal evidence, however, indicates that most fathers-to-be are helped by a simple explanation of the syndrome and reassurance that it is not uncommon among American and Canadian men.

**ALTERNATIVE TREATMENT**

Some expectant fathers report that meditation or such movement therapies as yoga and meditation are calming and relaxing. Peppermint tea or gingers are herbal remedies that help to relieve nausea.

**PROGNOSIS**

While baby is born couvades syndrome always goes off. Sometime few instances of this syndrome developing into full-blown psychosis (loss of contact with reality) have been reported in European medical journals, such cases are extremely rare.

**PREVENTION**

There is no known prevention couvade syndrome, as doctors do not understand why some men develop it and others do not develop.

**REFERENCES**
