

MATERNAL HEALTH : A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF GHANAIAN-CANADIAN IMMIGRANTS' BIRTHING EXPERIENCES



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Research Question

What are the birth related differences experienced by women who have given birth in Ghana and Canada?

INTRODUCTION

- The WHO (2016) defines maternal health as "the health of women during pregnancy, childbirth and the postpartum period".
- Maternal health matters because it impacts the survival chances of both the mother and her baby.
- Globally maternal mortality has reduced by 44% between 1990 and 2015.
- About 830 women die every day from pregnancy and childbirth related complications.
- 99% of these deaths occur in developing countries.
- Maternal mortality rate in Canada is 11 per 100,000 live births compared to 380 deaths per 100,000 live births in Ghana.

OBJECTIVE

- To compare women's birthing experiences between Ghana and Canada.

METHODS

Recruitment of 8 women was through advertisements (flyers at churches & community centers)

Data Collection:

- One-on-one semi-structured interviews.

Inclusion criteria:

- Ghanaian immigrant women who are 18 years of age or older.
- Fluent in English, Twi, or Fanti.
- Have given birth in both Ghana and Canada.
- Currently reside in Toronto.

Analysis: All transcripts were coded by research student and checked with the supervisor.

RESULTS

Table. 1 Summary of Findings

Birthing Factors	Ghanaian Experience (No. of participants)		Canadian Experience (No. of participants)	
	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative
Access to Health Care Services				
Cost of care	6	2	7	1
Physical access	6	2	8	0
Access to Skilled Birth Attendants	6	2	8	0
Access to services	1	7	8	0
Level of Support				
Family (i.e. Spouse)	0	8	8	0
Family (i.e. Extended)	8	0	0	8
Provision of information	4	4	8	0
Attitude of HCW (midwives)	4	4	8	0
Total	35 (54.69%)	29 (45.31%)	55 (85.94%)	9 (14.06%)

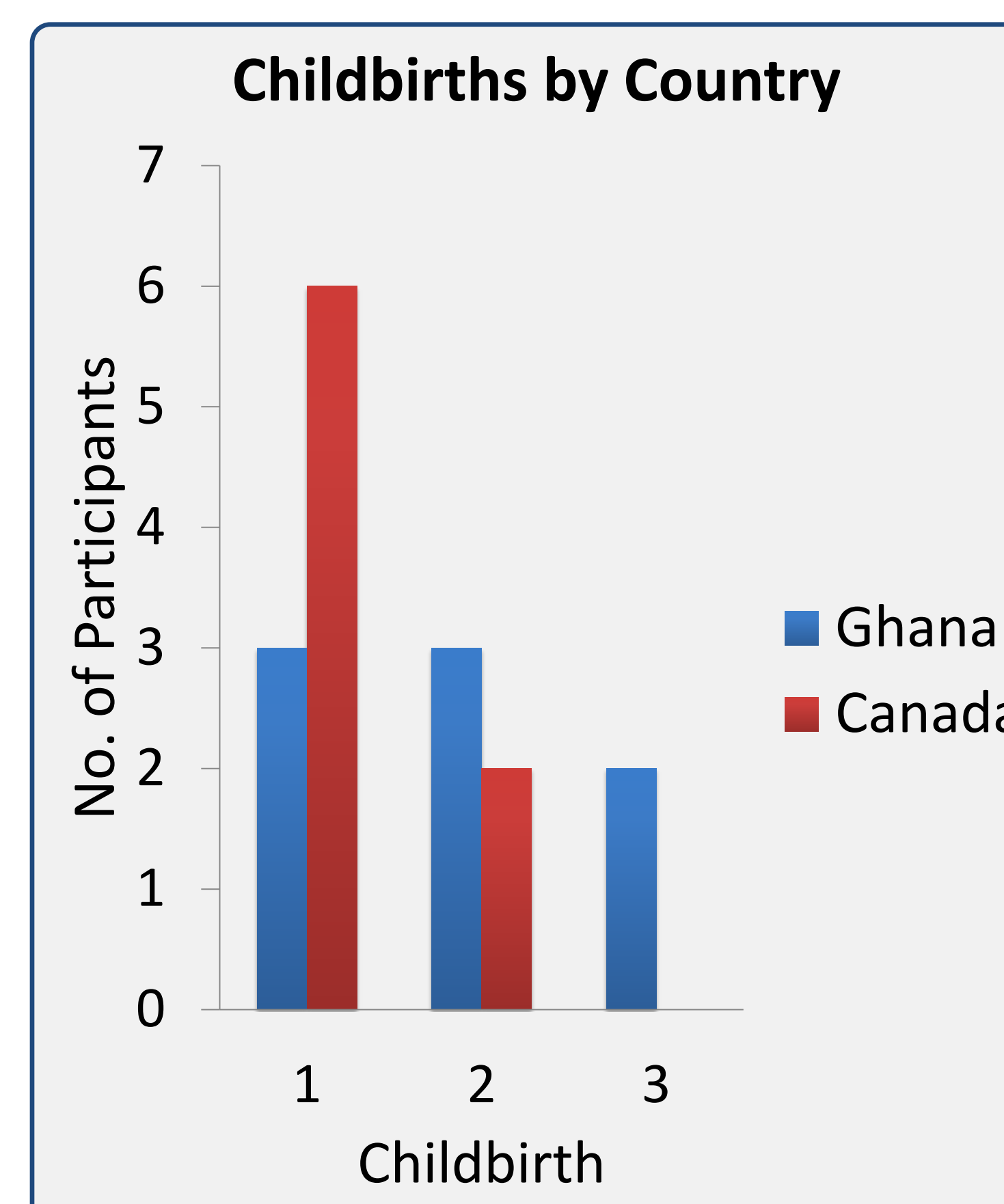


Fig.1 Childbirths by Country

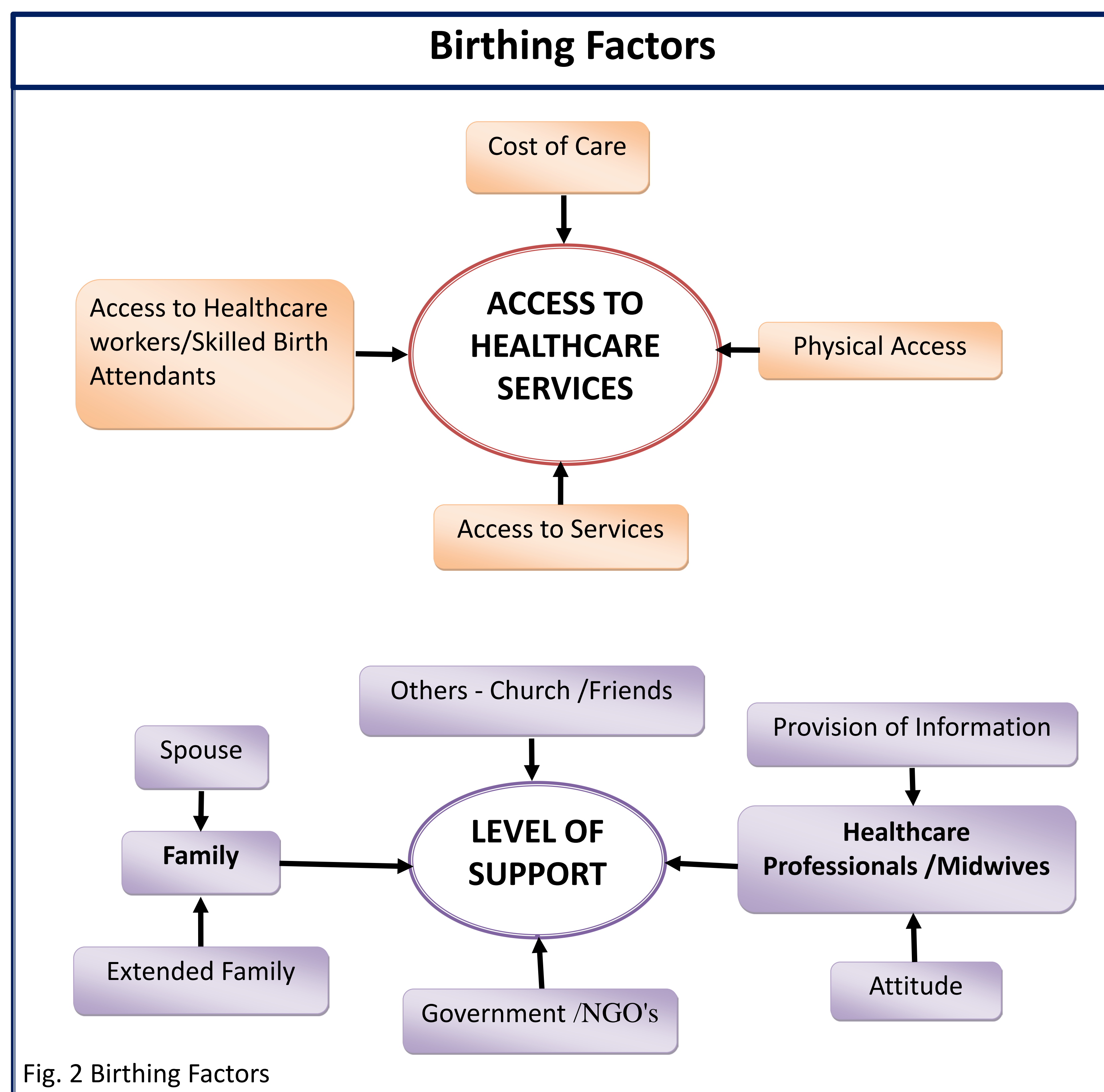


Fig. 2 Birthing Factors

DISCUSSION

- Two main themes were identified: access to healthcare services and level of support.
- The women reported some similarities (e.g. cost of care) and differences (e.g. familial support) in their experiences in both countries.
- Cost of care was not a concern for participants in both countries likely because they both have free health care systems.
- Physical /facility access to services was an issue in Ghana likely because there are fewer local hospitals and clinics available in Ghana compared to Canada.
- Physical access to healthcare facilities in Ghana varied depending on regional location.
- Familial support was different in Canada and Ghana and could be explained by cultural differences and behaviors.
- Less satisfaction with healthcare professionals' behavior in Ghana consistent with literature findings.

CONCLUSION

- The women also reported both positive and negative experiences in Ghana and Canada, however their positive experiences in Canada were more than that of Ghana.
- Increasing access to extended family support in Canada will facilitate a more positive experiences for Canadian immigrant women.
- Maternal health care services can be enhanced in Ghana through the provision of travel alternatives to hospitals.

LIMITATIONS

- The study result cannot be generalized due to its qualitative nature.
- Most of the participant experiences in Ghana were 20 years ago.
- Interview guide did not inquire about other factors that could have contributed to their experiences such as socio-economic status.

SAMPLE REFERENCES

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