Objective: to assess the evidence on scientific knowledge related to breastfeeding adolescents and the need for nursing care. Method: systematic review seeking the answer to the question: What are the priority learning needs for postpartum nursing care provided to adolescent mothers? A search was conducted on articles available in Portuguese and English, published between 2007 and 2013 and indexed in LILACS, MEDLINE, PubMed, and SciELO databases. Results: the sample consisted of ten articles addressing different needs of adult mothers, related to the new skills and the information necessary to manage postpartum issues regarding self-care and newborn care. Conclusions: the needs were not systematically identified, constituting a multicausal phenomenon arising from a multiplicity of factors from different dimensions that interact with each other, making it difficult to associate only one dimension. Descriptors: Adolescence; Pregnancy in Adolescence; Postpartum Period; Nursing Care.

RESUMO
Objetivo: analisar as evidências sobre o conhecimento científico relacionado com as puérperas adolescentes e a necessidade de cuidados de enfermagem. Método: revisão sistemática, visando à resposta à questão: Quais são as necessidades de aprendizagem prioritárias em cuidados de enfermagem no pós-parto das mães adolescentes? Realizou-se uma pesquisa dos artigos disponíveis em português e inglês, publicados entre 2007 e 2013 e indexados às bases de dados LILACS, MEDLINE, PubMed e coleção SciELO. Resultados: a amostra foi constituída por dez artigos expondo necessidades diferentes das mães adultas, relacionadas com as novas competências e informações necessárias para gerir as questões pós-parto, no autocuidado e no cuidado do recém-nascido. Conclusões: as necessidades não estavam sistematicamente identificadas, constituindo um fenômeno multicausal originado por uma multiplicitade de fatores provenientes de diferentes dimensões que interagem entre si, sendo difícil associar apenas uma dimensão. Descriptores: Adolescência; Gravidez na Adolescência; Período Pós-Parto; Cuidados de Enfermagem.

RESUMEN
Objetivo: analizar las evidencias acerca del conocimiento científico relacionado con madres adolescentes y la necesidad de cuidados de enfermería. Método: revisión sistemática buscando la respuesta a la pregunta: ¿Cuáles son las necesidades prioritarias de aprendizaje en cuidados de enfermería durante el periodo postparto de madres adolescentes? Fue llevada a cabo una investigación en artículos disponibles en portugués e inglés, publicados entre 2007 y 2013 e indexados en las bases de datos LILACS, MEDLINE, PubMed y SciELO. Resultados: la muestra se compuso de diez artículos abordando diferentes necesidades de madres adultas, relacionadas con las nuevas habilidades y la información necesaria para gestionar las cuestiones postparto en el autocuidado y cuidado del recién nacido. Conclusiones: las necesidades no se encontraban sistemáticamente identificadas, constituyendo un fenómeno multicausal originado en una multiplicitad de factores orígenes de diferentes dimensiones que interactúan entre sí, siendo difícil asociar solamente una dimensión. Descriptores: Adolescencia; Embarazo en la Adolescencia; Periodo Pós-Parto; Cuidados de Enfermería.
Adolescence is a period in which important decisions are taken from little experience and may have consequences for life. Help adolescents to grow requires an understanding not only of what they think, but mostly the way they think. Understanding adolescents means realizing that they experience a phase of life in which the changes occur more or less rapidly, both physically and emotionally. It is also necessary to understand aspects of their impulsiveness. The transition from childhood to adulthood is associated with risk behavior related to sexual activity and, in particular, unplanned pregnancies.

Although the number of adolescent pregnancies has already decreased, there is still great need for support. Early and not planned pregnancy can lead to physical, mental, emotional, and social overload affecting the development of adolescents, thus contributing positively or negatively to the changes in their future life. This kind of pregnancy can perpetuate the cycle of poverty, low educational level, and lack of perspective of life, since women are attributed with the main roles and accountability for their children.

The postpartum period is often overwhelming for the new adolescent mothers, because they have fewer resources and life experiences to manage this period in which anxiety is increased. Many of these adolescents have no experience in caring for children or newborns.

Compared to other mothers, adolescents exhibit major difficulties. They have less responsible behaviors, speak less about their concerns, provide a less stimulating environment for their children, and have different characteristics and frequency in the interaction with their children than those of adult mothers. It is observed that they are cognitively less prepared to take care of a newborn. They experience greater anxiety and feature less adaptation to their role. They have lack of experience in parental tasks, lack of preparation for caring for the child during pregnancy, or ineffectiveness of preparation programs, what determines high levels of anxiety when they go back home. In addition, the decreased length of hospital stay after childbirth should be taken into consideration.

The educational approach focused on pregnancy in adolescence has an intense relationship with the charts for health promotion—especially the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion—due to the correlation with the five fields of action of the health promotion proposed, the most relevant being the creation of favorable environments for health, and environmental health and human development issues, which cannot be separated. Development implies the improvement of quality of life and health. Promoting a healthy environment means understanding adolescents as subjects in their physical, social, economic, or political environments and the relationships with the social support networks.

The well-being of pregnant women and adolescent parents influences children's development from the physical, cognitive, behavioral, and emotional perspectives. The experiences of diseases and the development of the processes of life—pregnancy, birth, parenthood, adolescence, menopause, old age, and death—and the cultural and social transitions have been described as those that make individuals be vulnerable. This vulnerability arises from the fact that individuals do not know how to behave when facing a situation that they have never experienced before, not knowing how to deal with a new event and, as such, they feel insecure and unable to cope with the new situation. Transitions result from changes in life, health, relationships, and environments of the individuals. Actually, it is still stated that, in transitional situations, nurses are the main caregivers of users/families, because they are attentive to the needs and changes that the these situations entail in the life of those individuals. This factor helps nurses to better prepare those individuals to cope with these transitions through learning and acquiring new skills. Thus, it is possible to recognize the relevance of assessing the scientific literature produced in the area, as a way to enhance the understanding and discussion on the role of nursing in this specific field.

With this in mind, the goal of the present study is:

- To assess the evidence on scientific knowledge related to breastfeeding adolescents and the need for nursing care.

**METHOD**

In order to systematize the state of knowledge of nursing care about the needs of adolescent mothers, a bibliographical search was conducted in accordance with the methodological principles of a systematic literature review on the basis of Cochrane guidelines.

In this way, whether in the preparation of the research question, or in the definition of
found that three of them were repeated and they were excluded, leaving 38 articles for detailed assessment. The next step of the search included reading the abstracts in order to confirm whether the titles of the articles corresponded to the works they described.

As a result of the search in the databases based on the previously established inclusion criteria, 41 results were obtained in the first step. After organizing the articles, it was

1. Studies in other languages than English, Portuguese, French, or Spanish (due to the researcher's inability/lack of knowledge to translate other languages).

For the identification and selection of relevant studies included in the review, the concepts pertaining to the participants, the intervention, and the design of the intended studies were considered in order to define a set of synonyms and related terms that, by intersection, would lead to obtain the stabilized research expression.

From the descriptor MeSH (Medical Subject Heading) and using the keywords with the following sequence, namely: adolescent*; nursing care; adolescent* mother*; postnatal care*; health need*; newborn*; mothers*/education; and maternal-child care, a search was conducted in articles addressing the subject matter with full texts available on the Internet and written in Portuguese, English, and Spanish, published between January 2007 and December 2013.

The studies were assessed regarding methodological quality in accordance with the recommendations of the "Oxford Centre for Evidence-based Medicine".12 Data collection was carried out from May to June 2013 in EBSCO research platform, including the following databases: LILACS (Literature in the Health Sciences in Latin America and the Caribbean); MEDLINE (Medical Literature Analysis and Retrieval System Online - USA); PubMed (Public Medicine); CINAHL (Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature); Cochrane Library (database of systematic reviews); Nursing & Allied Health Collection: Comprehensive; MedicLatina; and SciELO (Scientific Electronic Library Online).
After the reading and critical assessment of the titles and abstracts, nine articles were excluded, because they did not fall within the topic under study. The remaining 29 articles were subjected to analysis and critical assessment through unabridged reading. It was found that six articles addressed the mothers’ needs, but they did not present any specificity or individuality related to the needs of adolescent mothers. Even though five articles addressed the subject matter, their goal was not to assess the needs of adolescent mothers in nursing care. Lastly, there were six articles that addressed adolescent mothers without criteria for inclusion in the study. In short, following the method referred, 12 scientific articles were obtained in the first step of the search. However, after the application of the criteria laid down, a final set of ten articles was selected (Figures 2 to 11).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Methods/ Participants</th>
<th>Evidence level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To describe and compare the learning needs during the postpartum period in adolescent mothers and their mothers.</td>
<td>Cross-sectional and descriptive study</td>
<td>Convenience sample (No.=100)</td>
<td>2B</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 2. Bowman and Ruchala’s study (2006)**

Two groups of mothers were assessed in this study (50 mothers/50 daughters, adolescent mothers). The participants showed interest in learning about newborn care. It was observed that the adolescent mothers showed greater interest in issues relating to newborn care. However, it was found that they also had needs for self-care, especially the resumption of sexual activity, and that several teaching strategies had been used.

<table>
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<th>Goals</th>
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<th>Methods/ Participants</th>
<th>Evidence level</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To explore and describe the experiences of adolescent mothers in their first pregnancy. To develop guidelines for the elaboration of a program on the needs of pregnant adolescents.</td>
<td>Phenomenological study</td>
<td>Interview using a guiding question. (No.=14)</td>
<td>3B</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 3. Maputle’s study (2006)**

This study used the phenomenological approach. Open interviews were carried out in depth. A general question was placed at the beginning, followed by other questions to help the interviewees talk about their experiences. It was observed that there was the need for support to encourage the adolescents to become secure and more independent. It was pointed out that the performance of the nurses was limited to technical and fragmented actions, centered on the biomedical model.

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<th>Goals</th>
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<th>Methods/ Participants</th>
<th>Evidence level</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To assess and synthesize from the literature focused on the importance of education programs on the prevention of adolescent pregnancy and parenthood promotion.</td>
<td>Qualitative study</td>
<td>Integrative literature review of 48 articles published on peer review system.</td>
<td>1A</td>
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**Figure 4. Strunk’s study (2008)**

The review of the studies demonstrated the effectiveness of intervention programs in schools for the promotion of parenthood and meeting the needs of adolescent mothers.

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<th>Goals</th>
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<th>Methods/ Participants</th>
<th>Evidence level</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To analyze the needs, concerns, and social support of single adolescents of Hispanic origin with low economic resources during the transition to motherhood.</td>
<td>Qualitative study</td>
<td>Focus group (No.= 16)</td>
<td>3B</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 5. Bergamaschi’s study (2008)**

The participants pointed out difficulties in accessing social support and information related to their health care, as well as their children’s. They identified obstacles in access to social support networks and barriers in health care. Trust relationships established by nurses with the community are an important factor in assisting these adolescents. The fact of being culturally sensitive to support social needs and identifying the barriers in health care provided to adolescent mothers is a facilitator in the process of transition to motherhood.
Goals | Method | Methods/ Participants | Evidence level
--- | --- | --- | ---
To describe the experiences in the trajectory of motherhood in adolescence. | Qualitative study | Phenomenological study using the method of oral history (No. = 21) | 3B

Figure 6. Hoga's study (2008)¹⁸

Through the interviews, it was possible to identify the needs the adolescent had regarding information and health care, concerning their rights and including privacy, confidentiality, and respect for cultural values and religious beliefs. It was found that negative, hegemonic, and prescriptive attitudes should be eliminated from educational activities and health care. It is concluded that the better quality of life is essential to reverse the current reality that characterizes motherhood in adolescence.

Goals | Method | Methods/ Participants | Evidence level
--- | --- | --- | ---
To define the relevant aspects referred to by adolescent mothers with respect to social support promoted by the nurses at the beginning of breastfeeding in the postpartum period. | Systematic literature review | Assessment of articles (No.=18) | 1A

Figure 7. Grassley's study (2010)¹⁷

The literature found valued social support in the postpartum period for the promotion of long-term health, either for the adolescents and their children. Support seems to be essential in the experience, both in the detection of needs and breastfeeding, whether from the informative, instrumental, or emotional perspectives.

Goals | Method | Methods/ Participants | Evidence level
--- | --- | --- | ---
To explore and understand the meaning and self-perceived experience of motherhood in adolescent primiparas during the period of four to six weeks postpartum. | Qualitative study | Content analysis (No.=160) | 2B

Figure 8. DeVito's study (2010)²¹

The study used semistructured interviews, in which the participants expressed little knowledge about how to care for their children, stating that the existing programs for motherhood support did not meet the needs of adolescent mothers. They pointed out that they felt little supported and insecure and mentioned the need for a reference element. However, it was found that home visits were very important for providing support and encouraging self-confidence and self-esteem.

Goals | Method | Methods/ Participants | Evidence level
--- | --- | --- | ---
To identify the meaning and implications of motherhood in adolescence. | Qualitative study | Semistructured interviews (No.=22) | 3B

Figure 9. Resta's study (2010)¹⁴

Most of the doubts and insecurities related to newborn care, especially to the umbilical cord stump, the first bath, sleep of the newborn, and breastfeeding. They also mentioned feelings of fear and anxiety regarding the mother-child adaptation process and care to be provided.

Goals | Method | Methods/ Participants | Evidence level
--- | --- | --- | ---
To know the perceptions of breastfeeding adolescents about nursing care. | Qualitative study | Semistructured interviews (No.=10) | 3B

Figure 10. Nóbrega and Bezerra's study (2010)²⁰

This study identified the need for support to encourage the adolescents to become more secure and independent, since the performance of the nurses was limited to technical and fragmented actions centered on the biomedical model.
In the interviews, the adolescent mothers wanted to know about care of episiotomy wound, abdominal incision, perineal care, family planning, and postpartum follow-up. It is also concluded that the behavior of parents reflects sociocultural values, traditions, and religious orientation of adolescent mothers.

**DISCUSSION**

With respect to the design, the primary studies included in this review are characterized as systematic and experimental reviews, with longitudinal, cross-sectional, exploratory, and qualitative cohorts. The results allow answering the pre-defined research questions; however, they present different levels of scientific evidence.

It was possible to make the comparison between the primary studies included in this systematic review, because they were not homogeneous in terms of sample, concept of adherence, metrics, and method used to assess adherence, since the studies found did not include meta-analyses.

The results of the review conducted corroborates with the fact that the needs of adolescent mothers—although representing a concern—were not systematically identified. This is a multicausal phenomenon that can be explained by the presence or absence of certain factors that determine the adaptation to the maternal role, including self-care and child care.

After assessing the documents, it was found that there was a multiplicity of factors arising from different dimensions. These dimensions interact with each other and it is difficult to associate only one dimension in the interference on these mother's needs.

These findings are consistent with the literature in the context of maternity in adolescence with social and cultural factors that involve needs regarding the provision of support for hygiene and comfort activities to the mothers and child health follow-up.

Adapting to motherhood represents the ability to overcome the tasks of pregnancy and puerperium development, merging them in the ability to care for and raise children, contributing to their harmonious development and also to their own personal development. However, this adaptation does not depend solely on the representations of pregnancy and motherhood, there are other factors involved that relate to the women, the newborns and the surrounding environments. On the other hand, most of the doubts and insecurities were related to newborn care, especially the umbilical cord stump, the first bath, the sleep of the newborn, and breastfeeding. The adolescent mothers reported feelings of fear and anxiety in the process of meeting the needs of the newborns with respect to the adaptation and care to be provided.

For its part, pregnancy, childbirth, and the puerperium are interconnected events, constituting a continuous process of women's adaptation to the maternal role. In this process, they need to use all the inborn or acquired mechanisms to face the challenge and adjust themselves to the new role.

Regarding the priority needs, the mothers mentioned knowledge about postpartum complications, care of episiotomy wound, and the resumption of sexual activity and the marital relationship. They also valued the social support for the postpartum period and the promotion of long-term health, both of the adolescents and their children.

Support seems to be essential in the experience of detecting the needs with regard to breastfeeding, whether from the informative, instrumental, or emotional perspectives. It was observed that there was the need for information and care for adolescents, regarding the respect for their rights, including privacy, confidentiality, cultural values, and religious beliefs.

Negative, hegemonic, and prescriptive attitudes should be excluded from educational activities and health care carried out with adolescent mothers. A better quality of life is an essential condition to reverse the current reality that involves motherhood in adolescence.

As priority needs, nurses considered the care of episiotomy, care of abdominal incision, signs of postpartum complications, and education concerning medication and vaginal losses as the five main postpartum learning needs for women. These results can be explained by the traditional performance of nurses, which emphasizes the medical aspect of care provided to women with less emphasis on the holistic care approach.

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**Table 1**

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<th>Goals</th>
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<th>Evidence level</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To explore and understand the concept of parenthood.</td>
<td>Qualitative study</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Semistructured interview</td>
<td>1B</td>
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<td>(No.=110)</td>
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**Figure 10.** Oweis, Gharabeh, and Aishee's study. (2012)
Interpersonal contact between professionals and adolescents ensures that the needs are met. However, it is stated that nursing care must be planned and targeted in an individual manner. From these actions, it is possible to establish a more satisfying bond between both parties, i.e., that mothers have the specific needs met. In this way, the participants become active in their own care and nurses become recognized for their work. Nurses do not provide holistic health care to adolescent mothers, but focused on the needs identified in order to empower these women in this critical period of their lives. All the studies demonstrated the need that these mothers have for guidance, education, and support in the performance of their new role. The early identification of the mothers and children's needs—according to the sensitivity relating the cultural characteristics of every adolescent—will be a facilitator aspect in the transition to the new role, as well as a generator of confidence and health gains in this population.

The results on the association between the learning needs and women's characteristics in the postpartum period stress the need for further research in order to identify the relationship between the maternal learning needs and these variables. It can also be affirmed that being aware of these needs promotes the adaptation to health programs and support provided to these mothers to help promote their goals and aspirations and, consequently, the well-being of their children.

Although pregnancy in adolescence is a topic studied cross-sectionally in various science fields, it is observed that most outcomes in nursing points out to the complexity of the experiences in the context of motherhood in adolescence and its significance as a factor involving interventions in the transition to motherhood.

Finally, the results found revealed that the needs identified can be various, such as support and newborn care, domestic accidents, as well as access to health care and employment.

**CONCLUSION**

The issue of interventions in pregnancy in adolescence is current and constitutes a social and economic problem, often associated with low education level, unemployment or precarious employment, and poverty. Thus, it constitutes a public health problem, especially due to the fact that it causes risks for the development of the children, the adolescents, and maternal-child health, as well as due to the social impact. Taking into account the systematic literature review conducted, it was possible to find that there is a punctual diagnosis without systematization of global needs. This way, there is no systematic diagnosis consistent with the needs of these mothers.

Being aware of the factors and indicators that intervene in this process, there is a possibility to measure these needs objectively. Through the quantitative measurement of these needs, it will be possible to negotiate a plan according to the needs found, empowering the mothers and nurses in order to promote their safety and well-being.

**REFERENCES**


Nursing care needs in the postpartum period...