Presentation of problems as a response to doctor’s question by pregnant women: Observation of pregnancy health examinations

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After World War II, pregnancy and childbirth in Japan, which experienced rapid medicalization, was discussed in the context of being “safe and comfortable.” In this context, women were regarded as a recipient of medical aid whose needs were satisfied through this aid. However, I wondered whether women expected to receive medical care from medical staff.

Therefore, with the cooperation of six pregnant women and four obstetrics facilities, continuous participation observation of processes from the pregnancy health examination to postpartum checkup was conducted and recorded using a video camera. In addition, I, Owada conducted semi-structured interviews with the women before and at the end of the survey, at each participation observation point to understand the women's actions.

Analyzing the data obtained through participation observation by employing ethnomethodology and conversation analysis revealed that the act of doctors asking questions enabled the women to present any problems during the pregnancy health examination. The act of doctors asking women performed at the start of the pregnancy health examination and when explaining the results thereof. However, depending on the stage at which it is performed, the contents of the problem presented by the women and how they are dealt with differed. Therefore, women understand the construction of the pregnancy health examination, select appropriate problems to present according to the stage during which the doctor asks questions, takes the response form to the doctor, and presents the problem.

Based on the above, women do not passively receive medical care, but by understanding the construction of the pregnancy health examination and presenting appropriate problems at appropriate times, they are involved in the progress of the pregnancy health examination and associated actions.

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