

A Reinterpretation of Maternal Requests for Cesarean Sections in Taiwan

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the gender politics of Cesarean sections (C-sections) in Taiwan, the country with the third highest Cesarean rates (C-rates) in the world. Public discourses attribute the high C-rates to the demands of women. According to my fieldwork, the Taiwanese medical system itself is responsible for high C-rates. Taiwanese hospitals enforce a significant amount of medical interventions that increases C-sections through social, psychological, and biological processes. Aware of these intervention practices, women request a C-section out of fear of “suffering twice”, or in other words, trying to deliver vaginally but ending up having to have a C-section. I will re-interpret maternal requests of C-sections within this context.

Keywords: Cesarean sections, Taiwan, gender politics, manufactured risk, reflexive response.

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