

Why Give Birth? An Exploratory Study of The Development of Fear in Childbirth

Black women have been disproportionality affected by medical mistreatment at the hands of doctors and nurses in the medical field (MacDorman et al., 2021). There are significant disparities between Black and White women in maternal mortality. The maternal mortality rate for Black women 3.55 times higher than White woman (MacDorman et al., 2021). Additionally, Black women are often ignored and feel silenced by their physicians, implicit bias from physicians that leads to poor medical care, and stereotypes that prevent physicians from providing adequate medical care (Glover, 2021). Moreover, there is a lack of research focusing on the development of fear resulting in a lack of understanding of how the presence of fear influences pregnancy outcomes. Therefore, Black women who have a fear and/or mistrust in the medical community do not go to the doctor's office routinely or as often as they should due to their worry of being unheard.

The purpose of this study is to explore and understand the presence of fear on childbirth in women as well as medical mistreatment and how this fear affects pregnancy outcomes. A comparison between races will enhance the study by further exploring research on medical mistreatment and maternal health on Black women. Previous research only focuses on fear of childbirth in women during their third trimester. This study aims to focus on women throughout all stages of the childbirth process. The data collection method will consist of an online survey from women who have had their first pregnancy or birth. Sample questions include: how many birth stories have you heard? How many traumatic birth stories have you heard? What was considered traumatic about the birth story? How scared were you after listening to the traumatic birth stories? The survey gains an understanding if and how women are developing a fear of childbirth pre-pregnancy. The questions on the survey are a mixture of categorical and likert type scale rating their fear and anxiety. The hypothesis in this study is that women who have heard multiple traumatic birth stories prior to giving birth will develop a fear of childbirth.

Keywords: Fear of Childbirth, Black Women, Maternal health