



“What about the Men?”

Experiences of men of color who are partners to women who are at risk for preterm birth

Researchable Questions

In November, 2017, UCSF researchers with the California Preterm Birth Initiative (PTBi-CA) conducted two focus groups with twelve men from Fresno who identified as African American, Asian American, and Latin American. These men shared their experiences and priorities for research to reduce preterm birth and improve outcomes. Here are the researchable questions they proposed, listed under the broad priority topic headings. We call for researchers, healthcare providers and communities to work together to answer these questions - and to share and implement best evidence-based practices – for the health of mothers, babies and families everywhere.

Causes and risks of preterm birth

- Is there anything to predict preterm birth or other complications?
- Does social economic status make a difference in preterm birth outcomes?
- Why does Fresno deal with so much preterm birth? What have researchers found out already?

Preterm baby health

- Why do preterm babies get infections in the neonatal intensive care unit?
- Does rapid feeding of preterm babies cause infections?
- What determines a preterm baby’s long term growth?
- What can be done to optimize childhood growth of preterm babies? How can we support their growth?
- Is preterm birth a risk factor for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)?

Hospital/Institutional practices

- Do hospitals have quotas they have to meet for number of cesarean section deliveries or amount of drugs they use?
- Why do you get the advanced directive information at hospital admission? Who decides who is more important to save, mom or baby?
- Do hospitals have policies around cesarean sections and natural delivery?
- Why are there such different practices across hospitals in other countries?

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Profit and insurance issues

- How much does profit play into a healthcare provider's management of mothers?
- How much does loss of profit suppress research findings?
- Do people receive different care based on where they go due to type of insurance?
- Why do people with public insurance get the short end of the stick when it comes to tests and treatments?
- Why is registering your baby for insurance mandatory in first month? Why is the baby not covered under the mother?
- Are doctors thinking about follow up appointments and generating money during their care?
- Are there differences in cesarean section rates based on type of insurance?

Methods and complications of birth

- How long can you wait for a first-time mother to try to deliver naturally before deciding to do a cesarean section?
- How do providers know when to perform a cesarean section?
- Is the decision to do a cesarean section based on provider preference?
- Does size of baby determine chance of cesarean section ?
- How and why is it decided if a mother can have a natural birth or a cesarean section after a cesarean section for the first birth
- Why do nurses and doctors insist on repeat cesarean sections when a woman wants a vaginal birth?
- Why do we medicalize the birth process?
- Can you prevent or avoid the cord around the baby's neck?
- What are the risks and harms of intervening to "pop the [amniotic] sack"?

Decision-making: who and how

- Why don't partners/pregnant families get all the information to be able to make decisions about treatments?
- Do nurses have authority to make decisions about treatments?
- Why don't nurses who have the relationship with the patient, do the explaining and be able to make decisions with the patient?
- What do parents need in order to make decisions?
- How do providers decide to get ultrasounds?
- Are there external factors that determine how decisions are made – like provider preference, training, liability concerns, nurse preference?
- Why are we waiting for doctors to make decisions?

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Parent health during/before pregnancy and/or background conditions

- Prior to the pregnancy, does the health of parents (moms and dads) determine outcomes for babies?
- Why are some women's periods irregular?
- Is there anything that can be done to prevent gestational diabetes?
- What is the cause and how does gestational diabetes affect pregnancy?
- What is the purpose of patient (self) monitoring with diabetes during pregnancy?
- Why do people with diabetes have multiple appointments?

Diet during pregnancy

- How does environment/diet play on outcomes and preterm birth?
- Does fast food have an influence on outcomes?
- Does mom's diet affect the baby? What if the mom has diabetes?

Father's role in pregnancy

- What is the father's role in pregnancy?
- What can men do to prepare for pregnancy?
- What can be done to recognize men's role in improving pregnancy care and outcomes?
- What is a better way to approach men's health?
- What can be done to improve birth classes and other pregnancy education to include men's health and role?
- Can role modeling and mentoring be effective to promote healthier pregnancies and babies?
- What happens when men are not able to participate in the pregnancy?
- How do unjust systems affect men's involvement in pregnancy and fatherhood?
- How do major stressors such as a dad not having a job or being incarcerated or living in a violent neighborhood affect the pregnancy and baby?

Support for families

- Are there support systems available to families to make decisions, who may not have resources to ask questions?
- Is there support available, like a coach, to help with difficulties and stress by being the "go-between" for communication?
- Is there support available for spiritual services?
- What support groups are available for men?

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Information needs of partners

- What is the problem with mixing blood types between maternal and fetal blood?
- If a mom has mixed blood type with one pregnancy, can it be prevented in the future?
- How does baby's heart rate affect or relate to the mom's contractions?
- Is there standard information given to parents when a baby is past their due date ?
- Why aren't there standards for parents receiving information?
- Why do I have to ask for all the information from our clinical team?
- How do providers determine what's the right weight for a baby?
- How does measuring the fetus determine gestational age?
- How do we know gestational age of the baby, or when the baby is full term, when the mom has irregular periods?

Screening and diagnostic testing in pregnancy

- What does protein in your urine mean, and what is its relationship to birth outcomes?
- What is the cause of preeclampsia?
- Is there a link between protein in the urine and preeclampsia?
- Is there a standard range for protein in urine during pregnancy?
- What is the purpose and risk of amniocentesis?
- Is there another test as accurate and safer than amniocentesis?

Communication/attitudes of healthcare providers and researchers

- Why can't doctors be more spiritual or human?
- How much do healthcare providers really know about pregnancy and birth?
- How much are we the guinea pigs in research?
- Is it illegal to use patients as "experiments" without them knowing it?

Treatment and prevention of preterm birth

- Why can some women have both preterm babies and term babies?
- Is there treatment for Rh incompatibility?
- Once protein is detected in the urine, can we do something about it?

Men's health

- What is known about the effects of men's diet on the pregnancy and birth?
- Why do men get cravings during pregnancy?
- Why do men gain weight during pregnancy?
- Why do men get acid reflux during pregnancy?
- How can a man's mental, emotional and physical health affect the pregnancy? Or be affected by pregnancy?
- What are the experience of younger men and teens during pregnancy and new fatherhood?

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