



## “What about the Men?”

### Researchable questions posed by San Francisco fathers

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In September 2019, UCSF researchers with the California Preterm Birth Initiative (PTBi-CA) conducted two focus groups with twelve men from San Francisco who identified as African American. These men shared their experiences and priorities for research to reduce preterm birth and improve outcomes. The San Francisco-specific priority research topics, priority research questions, and full list of researchable questions, sorted by topic, are shown below.

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 parents, babies and families everywhere.

#### **Hospital/institutional practices**

- Is training for decreasing stereotypes and disrespect more effective if led by the community, for example by Black men?
- Why are Black men excluded by healthcare providers during childbirth?
- What interventions can be developed to change the attitudes of healthcare providers toward Black fathers and include them in their partner's and child's care?
- Why are people that are not from our community/share our lived experience in positions to work with/serve our community?
- What can be done to have more people from the same background or “in the trenches” providing services/interacting with clients?
- Why don't newborn care providers talk with and educate fathers of preemies – why do they ignore dads and only speak with mothers?
- What is UCSF doing to ensure access for pregnant and at-risk youth in the local communities?
- Why are Black fathers not given the benefit of the doubt in the medical system?

#### **Teen health and pregnancy**

- How effective is parent talking to young teen girls about pregnancy prevention?
- How effective are teen girl education groups in preventing teen pregnancy?
- Why are young teen girls at risk of getting pregnant? Is it because they don't get enough love growing up?
- How effective is sex education in school?
- Why are teens (boys and girls) vulnerable to getting pregnant too soon?
- What resources and information is available for teens in "the margin" who may not get health education because they are not in school?
- What education approaches can help young people understand the long-term impact of unhealthy behaviors and to help them develop healthy behavior?
- Do youth know that they need to take their health serious or it may impact their birth outcomes?

Date prepared: 2.20.2020



### **Father's role in pregnancy**

- What are better ways for men to communicate with women during pregnancy - express support, empathy, and reduce stress?
- Is women's mental health impacted when a partner will not deal with her?
- What can men do to support their child's development during pregnancy?
- What things do men do that are harmful?
- How can fathers help their partners change unhealthy behaviors during pregnancy, and not cause more harm?
- How can fathers support their partner's healthy diet during pregnancy?

### **Support for families**

- What supports are available for women going through pregnancy alone?
- What can be done to restructure the social support system so fathers can be with their partner? Specifically, housing
- Why are men of color not expected to be part of the household?
- How can we be smarter about funneling resources to fathers that want to support their communities?
- What can be done to keep families together, instead of tearing them apart?
- What can CPS/Social Services do to keep fathers involved in their partner and children's lives?
- What can be done to make positive African American men role models and examples of parenting more visible?

### **Causes and risks of preterm birth**

- Why are we just now focusing on preterm birth, given that this is such a huge problem for our community?
- Why was my son born preterm at seven months? What causes preterm birth?
- What can be done to accelerate preterm birth research given the urgency of the problem?
- What can be done to increase investment in preterm birth research?
- Why are some babies born early when the mom has no risk factors and does everything right?
- Is weed harmful to the woman's pregnancy or babies health?

### **Men's health**

- How can providers support men through their transitions and changes in priorities over time? Kids and grandkids
- Why do men experience "pregnancy symptoms" during their partner's pregnancy?
- How does economic stress impact a father's relationship with his partner?
- What changes happen to fathers during pregnancy and childbirth?
- What stresses do African American men experience during their partners' pregnancy?
- Should fathers be on a special diet during pregnancy?

### **Preterm baby health**

- How does a mother's drug use affect babies in the short and long term?
- Why do some preemies do well and are healthy and others aren't?
- How do drugs impact babies in the short and long term? Do they grow out of it?

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### **Information needs of partners**

Why can't fathers receive the same supports and education during pregnancy that women receive?

### **Communication/attitudes of healthcare providers**

- Why do researchers not report results back to the participants?
- How can we change attitudes and stereotypes of providers about Black fathers?
- Why isn't there sensitivity/cultural competency training for clinicians?
- Why don't people ask us about what's important to us?
- Why are we perceived to be stereotypes in movies, etc.?

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