

Cultural Apathy: The #1 Killer of the African American Mothers and Infants

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Introduction

Black women in the United States are more than two and a half times more likely to die of a pregnancy-related condition than white women. A lot of these problems boil down to the lack of education healthcare providers have on the culture of African American women, which results in a lack of communication and negative patient outcomes. The purpose of our educational project is to educate healthcare providers on the culture and needs of African American women, resulting in a holistic patient-centered care. We created an educational session presented to health care providers at Mercy Fairfield's birthing center on what African American women complained of most, what they expected from healthcare providers, and what they enjoyed from the peripartum experience.

Literature Search

Databases: University of Cincinnati online library, CINAHL, and Medline.

Keywords: African American women, black, minority, pregnancy, health care professionals, racial bias, peripartum, postpartum, complications and c-section.

Outcomes: From these keywords we were able to find at least 20 articles as a group on our topic. Our articles helped us to see where healthcare providers fail when it comes to communication and understanding the needs of pregnant African American women, as well as what African American women want to see change.

Current Evidence

- Black mothers were ten times more likely than white mothers to report being treated unfairly while in the hospital due to their race or ethnicity
- 18 percent of black women reported feeling pressured into having a c-section, which is nearly twice as often as white women
- from 2002-2014, there were 639 postpartum deaths among African American women compared to white women who had 572 deaths and Hispanic women who had 251 deaths.
- Women were able to report how well they felt improvement could be obtained by sitting, teaching, evaluating, understanding and engaging in a conversation to listen to their unique concerns without characterizing them as "another pregnancy" or another "black woman"

Education Plan & Implementation

Objectives:

- Demonstrate understanding of how low-quality perinatal care contributes to high mortality rates in African American women..
- Identify 3 barriers that keep African American women from getting the care they need.
- Demonstrate what healthcare providers can do to influence the mortality rates of pregnant and postpartum African American women

Setting and Target Audience: Healthcare Workers at Mercy Fairfield on the Labor & Delivery Unit

Methods : Poster presentation, Handouts, Post survey

Education Points

In our research we discovered that nurses spend on average less than 10 minutes educating on postpartum warning signs. We educated our nurses on using the acronym POST BIRTH as an easy way to educate patients on what symptoms to be concerned about after giving birth. One of the biggest barriers African American women felt was an issue was lack of education about their condition and a lack of time to ask questions. Healthcare providers need to allow time for proper education and questions to not only give new mothers the education they need to be successful, but also to save their lives. African American mothers want to feel like they matter and not just another case.

SAVE YOUR LIFE: Get Care for These POST-BIRTH Warning Signs

POST-BIRTH WARNING SIGNS

Call 911 if you have:

- Pain in chest
- Labored breathing or shortness of breath
- Seizures
- Thoughts of hurting yourself or your baby

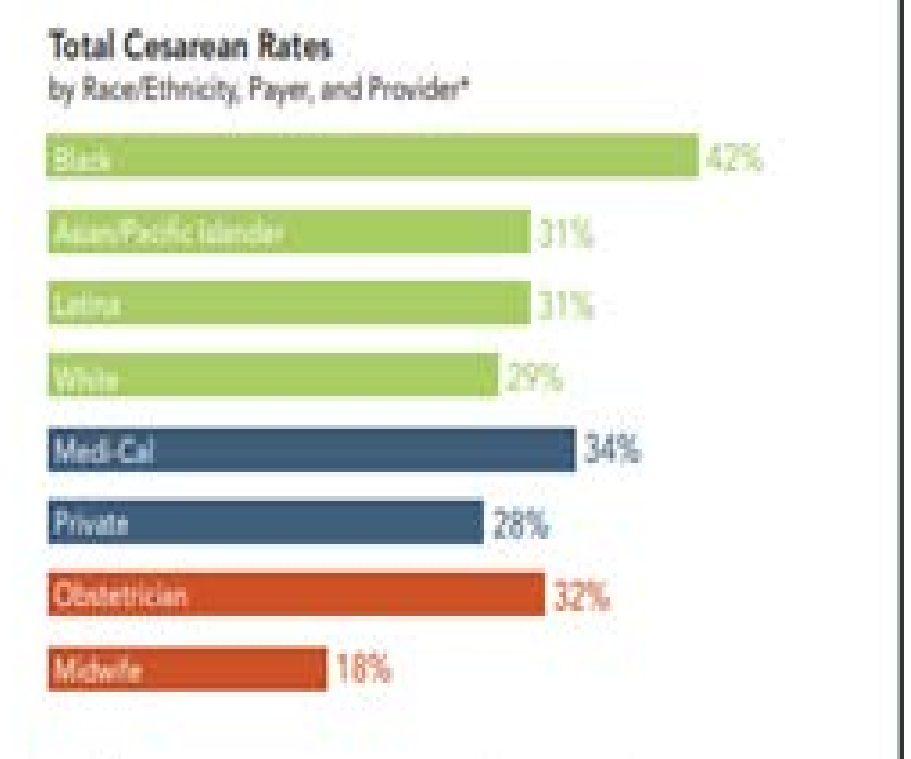
Call your healthcare provider if you have:

- Bleeding, soaking through more pads/tamers, or blood clots, the size of an egg or bigger
- Swelling that is not healing
- Red or swollen leg, that is painful or warm to touch
- Temperature of 100.4°F or higher
- Headache that does not get better, even after taking medicine, or that fluctuates with blood changes

POST-BIRTH WARNING SIGNS

GET HELP

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Feedback

Healthcare workers on the Labor and Delivery Unit were given survey sheets to fill out with a scale of 1-5 of how strongly they agreed or disagreed with the given statements. One represented strongly disagree, and five represented strongly agree. This sheet had a total of five questions, and eleven total surveys were given.

On average, the presentation was rated a 4.8 for being presented in a way that engaged the audience, and a 5 for the information being accurate, current and at an appropriate level. The average for the presentation meeting personal professional expectations was a 5. On average, the healthcare employees rated a 4.9 for the content being relevant to their practice as a nurse. And finally, the audience rated a five for the helpfulness of the presentation to make them feel more culturally aware about the needs of African American women during the perinatal period and how they can have a positive effect on mortality rates.

Lessons Learned

- During the prenatal period, we would recommend that providers spend more time talking with their patients and educating them about the importance of prenatal appointments and what to look out for throughout their pregnancy
- Healthcare providers who work with women during the intrapartum period should strive to promote vaginal deliveries for their African American patients to decrease complications associated with c-sections and improve patient satisfaction
- Empowering African American women by providing unbiased treatment, culturally sensitive care, clear communication and participatory decision-making during childbirth will increase health outcomes for both mother and infant.
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