



Paternal Involvement in Pregnancy Outcomes From Preconception to First Year of Life



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Father Involvement – A Community Perspective



Context

While there are assets and challenges associated with all populations, men of color particularly, African American men, share disproportionate burdens in several domains related to fatherhood. Consistent with basic principles and practices of public health, which target those who bear the greatest burdens, this presentation focuses primarily on African American men.



In introducing the 1985 Report of the Secretary's Task Force on Black and Minority Health, then-Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Margaret Heckler wrote,

"[T]here was a continuing disparity in the burden of death and illness experienced by Black and other minority Americans, as compared with our nation as a whole. That disparity has existed ever since accurate Federal recordkeeping began more than a generation ago, and although our health charts do itemize steady gains in the health of minority Americans, the stubborn disparity remained . . . an affront to both our ideals and to the ongoing genius of American medicine (U.S. DHHS, 1985)."



The Task Force Report was the first time that the Federal Government acknowledged that health disparities could be chronicled by race and ethnicity. (Heckler, 1985).

- The 1985 Task Force Report recorded 60,000 excess deaths among African Americans.
- Excess deaths are additional, presumably preventable and unnecessary, deaths among African Americans compared to their non-Hispanic White counterparts.
- Six causes: cardiovascular diseases and stroke, cancer, cirrhosis, diabetes, homicide and unintentional injury, and infant mortality. (80% of deaths were from these six causes)



- In 1992, HIV/AIDS was recorded as the seventh cause of excess deaths among African Americans (Hann, 1992, pp. 268-271).
- In 2002, the 60,000 excess deaths reported in 1985 had risen to 83,000 (Satcher, 2011, pp. 41-47). Standard Mortality Rate for African American men worsened.
- Standard Mortality Rate increased among African American men or lesser improvement in mortality rates for African American men compared to others.
- African American men live approximately six years shorter than their non-Hispanic White counterparts. (69.7 vs. 75.7)



- African American, Hispanic and Native American men are disproportionately burdened by inequities in education, housing, income, incarceration rates, unemployment, as well as health-related morbidities.



Operational Definitions

Fatherhood: A function of caring for and nurturing the next generation of offspring from birth to young adulthood. (Hill, 2007, p. 41)

Community: Individuals, who share certain commonalities, be they cultural or geographic, social or political. (De La Cancela, Chin & Jenkins, 1998, p.3)



Operational Definitions (Continued)

Culture: Functional, internally consistent system of beliefs, attitudes, values, expectations and norms/patterns of conduct. (King, 2002, pp. 91-112)

Health: A synergistic interplay between the physical, social, psychological and spiritual well-being of the individual and groups in their physical and social environment. (Warren, 2010, p.48)



Challenges

Father Involvement is Fatherhood

- Generative – facilitates the growth of a child from birth to young adulthood
- Relational – requires regular interaction between the child and the father



Challenges (Continued)

- Transcends biology
- Operates throughout the life cycle
- Grounded in community networks
- External factors affect fatherhood

Fatherhood can involve any male who fulfills the caring and nurturing task on a regular basis over a significant period of time.



A Public Health Model To Promote Fatherhood

- ***Promoting Health***: securing, maintaining, preserving and promoting relational ties
- ***Primary Prevention***: protecting the relational networks through promoting social policies, consultation and education



A Public Health Model To Promote Fatherhood (Continued)

- ***Secondary Prevention***: early intervention when any network begins to collapse
- ***Tertiary Prevention***: fosters major rehabilitation of those fathers who have become disconnected.



REFLECTIONS