

#170 Christina Ellison

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Assessing social determinants of health among obstetric patients in Brooklyn during the COVID-19 pandemic

As staggering socioeconomic, racial and ethnic disparities in medical outcomes are repeatedly documented, there has been an increasing emphasis on understanding the social determinants of health (SDOH). The COVID-19 pandemic further exposed health disparities with disproportionate rates of mortality in Black, Latino and Native American populations across the country. Shutdowns in response to the pandemic resulted in millions of Americans losing their jobs and access to other critical resources, exacerbating the impact of the pandemic on communities of color. This study focuses on several SDOH and how they have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, paying special attention to a particularly vulnerable population, the obstetrical patient population in Brooklyn. From April to June 2020, the peak of the pandemic in New York City, SUNY Downstate College of Medicine student volunteers conducted calls to obstetrical clinic patients at the University Hospital of Brooklyn (UHB). Respondents were screened for socioeconomic stressors and social needs. Patients who screened positive were offered social services and the prevalence of several SDOH were calculated. Of the 162 patients that were surveyed, 91.40% (148) identified as Black, African American or Afro-Caribbean. The most common reported need was healthcare related with 46 respondents (28.40%) needing assistance re-scheduling appointments, filling prescriptions or other urgent medical needs. Additional stressors included food insecurity (14.20%), housing instability (12.96%), difficulty paying bills (25.31%), disruptions in childcare (4.97%), lack of companionship (6.79%), and intimate partner violence (1.23%). This study explores the needs and challenges faced by the largely Afro-Caribbean pregnant population at UHB during the COVID-19 pandemic. It identifies potential areas for intervention by policy makers and providers that can lead to improved social support and overall health for this patient population.