B56

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Factors influencing the well-being of perinatal individuals who are economically marginalized: A qualitative study.

Intro
Public health crises, such as COVID-19, disproportionately impact economically marginalized individuals. This study aims to understand factors that influenced the wellbeing of economically marginalized perinatal individuals amidst a public health crisis to inform responsive interventions.
Methods
Semi-structured qualitative interviews were conducted with 24 individuals receiving pregnancy-related care from 11/08/2021-2/28/2022. Interdisciplinary team reviewed transcripts developing a codebook consisting of a priori & emergent codes. Transcripts were coded by 2 investigators through coding consensus.
Results
Findings suggest that policies implemented at federal & state levels amidst a public health crisis also impact organizational policies & structures, interpersonal relations, clinician-patient encounters, & individual well-being. For example, an individual suggests that COVID-19 risk mitigation policies implemented in her healthcare setting heightened her anxiety levels surrounding access to care, her individual decision-making capacity with healthcare seeking behavior, her partner being able to accompany her & her decision to not have any more children. Other individuals reported similar disruptions in social support systems, difficulties accessing healthcare services, and challenges in managing family responsibilities due to pandemic-related stressors.
Conclusion
By tracing the impact of policies & shifting social contexts amidst a public health crisis, our analyses identify how policies at the federal, state, & organizational levels impact the wellbeing of economically marginalized perinatal individuals. Attention to the ways within which these policies exacerbate inequities is critical to inform public health interventions, target resources, identify key areas for support, & build resilient healthcare systems.