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Interview transcript participant #04

Auriluz Pacheco

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PROJECT**

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INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT PARTICIPANT #04

Interviewer: Auriluz Pacheco

Date of Interview: October 22nd, 2020

Location of Interview: New York, NY

NYC MHOP Interview Transcript #04

Transcribed by Auriluz Pacheco

Auriluz: It is October 22nd, 2020, and today I am conducting an interview via Zoom, doing an oral history project for the New York City Maternal Health Oral History Project, which aims to document the experiences of women who underwent or are currently undergoing pregnancy during the Covid-19 pandemic. Before we begin, I'll just be asking a few demographic questions, is that alright?

Participant 4: Yes.

Auriluz: Can you tell me your age please?

Participant 4: 25.

Auriluz: Would you be able to give me a range of like your income?

Participant 4: Let me guess. Well it has changed. Around \$35,000.

Auriluz: Can you tell me the borough you live in?

Participant 4: Yes, the Bronx.

Auriluz: Are you currently pregnant or have already given birth?

Participant 4: I'm very pregnant.

Auriluz: Hahira, Congratulations. When did you first find out that you're pregnant? Was it before or during the shutdown?

Participant 4: It was the very beginning of March I was actually pregnant.

Auriluz: Okay, so how many months are you currently?

Participant 4: Eight months.

Auriluz: How are you currently feeling? And how did you feel once you found out you were pregnant?

Participant 4: Right now, I'm just tired and in the beginning, I was just in disbelief. I wasn't expecting to get pregnant.

Auriluz: After you found out did you have any concerns about your health, the baby on your pregnancy appointments and have these concerns changed since when you first found out?

Participant 4: They're still the same concerns of always just like taking the baby out but now it's also the family getting to visit the baby. My partner being able to come into the room with me.

Auriluz: Were there any things that you had heard about pregnancy and COVID?

Participant 4: There isn't really much information on it.

Auriluz: What kind of information were you hoping to find?

Participant 4: I just wanted to know if I were, like how. What are the risks of me getting COVID and the baby? What would happen, what would be the steps? They've said nothing.

Auriluz: So can you describe what your experience has been like?

Participant 4: So far, I haven't had any complications. But it's just been a little hard because I'd like to get out. And I heard maintaining physical activity makes it easier for the labor process and the pregnancy over all. I'm also out of work right now so I have no reason to go out.

Auriluz: Has it changed like attention wise, appointment wise, health care provider wise?

Participant 4: I'm from Queens and I didn't want to give birth somewhere to far off. However, they sent me to a hospital somewhere around the Bronx with my first appointment. And my appointments have changed like three times, they keep rescheduling because hospitals are like unavailable. So when I went the first time I got blood work and tests, I got basically the first three appointments in one day. It was just a bunch of stuff going on but in the beginning it was hard to really receive proper care.

Auriluz: How has your experience been once you enter the spaces?

Participant 4: Besides the fact that my partner can't go anywhere, it's pretty fine. Like I'll only have to wait a bit. The way things are scheduled it's like you only have a bit of available people in the office. For me, it's been fun. It's just been harder for my partner because he can't be there.

Auriluz: And has your healthcare provider provided any additional resources for you?

Participant 4: Yeah they gave me the WIC program. A breastfeeding specialist. They did honestly give me options such as x-rays.

Auriluz: Are there any resources you wish they would currently provide you with?

Participant 4: Um. No, I actually think everything was taken care of.

Auriluz: That's great to hear. How knowledgeable would you say you are around your options around childbirth?

Participant 4: I would say like 75%?

Auriluz: Okay, so what kind of information would you say that you know? And what kind of information would you say that you wish you had a little more knowledge on?

Participant 4: This is my first pregnancy. So, everything I do know is like, textbook. So it's just like everything. I know that some things are genetic, like, birth can be easier for me or harder. I don't know if I want to break or not, you know. It's more of a concern of how my body works.

Auriluz: What about in terms of your options around like actually giving birth? So like midwives, doulas? In hospitals? At home?

Participant 4: I really only know about hospitals.

Auriluz: So what are some things that you have learned so far? And what are some things that you're hoping to learn more about?

Participant 4: Breastfeeding, which I'm going to do. Diet. And honestly I hope that everything goes well breastfeeding. How to latch, it can be a struggle.

Auriluz: So you'd like to take lactation courses?

Participant 4: Yeah.

Auriluz: You have mentioned that you have been reading textbooks and stuff. Where else have you been getting information from around the maternal experience both before and during the shutdown? Is it family, friends, your doctors, online?

Participant 4: Doctors, There's an app that I have for my pregnancy, family. Everywhere.

Auriluz: So in terms of that, you mentioned that you had a harder time getting in contact with doctors before, like early in your pregnancy as compared to now can you maybe, can you tell me a little bit more about that?

Participant 4: Yeah, I kind of figured out around sometime around March towards the end. I missed my period and was feeling nauseous and stuff. I took a pregnancy test and then I reached out to a clinic and tried to get an appointment. I didn't get one for like, this was like mid May. It was about me having anxiety. And then after that it was minus two visits where it was facetime visits. It didn't really feel like I was getting anything out of like, I was just like, it was really just up to me to ask questions. And when I did ask it felt like an interview.

Auriluz: So you didn't feel like the doctors were giving you much information or you just felt like, if you wouldn't have asked questions it wouldn't have been information you received?

Participant 4: Yeah, it was just like, at least the first one, I switched doctors. The first doctor I was seeing, she was just like speaking to me, like I've been through this many times before. As if I was a colleague of hers or something and I was just like okay or whatever. And she kept saying a lot of "you know". Meanwhile I have no idea what she's speaking about. I thought okay after next appointment I'll get more clarity. It was basically just a bunch of that and she was talking to

me about the upcoming appointments and the system. But like, I've never done a test or what she was telling me about. It was just an overflow.

Auriluz: So what are some things that you thought would happen throughout your pregnancy that didn't, whether it be like in terms of your experience and things that you were given? Your relationship with doctors, etc.

Participant 4: I honestly it's just difficult right now because I'm not driving anymore so I take the train so it's really just like...annoying. It's all a whole disappointment but I don't expect anything different. I don't really have much expectation.

Auriluz: So have you ever had a conversation with the healthcare provider on COVID?

Participant 4: Well besides normal stuff like you know, wearing a mask, distancing and just minimal contact. , quarantin

Auriluz: Do you feel safe in medical settings?

Participant 4: Yeah.

Auriluz: Do you have any concerns for when you do go in to give birth?

Participant 4: Just that my partner won't be able to go in because before at least they weren't letting anyone inside. Now they are. I almost changed from them because that's just crossing the line.

Auriluz: What is something you wish you could tell your hospital?

Participant 4: I don't really know what the options are, like keeping the baby in the room? I don't want them to take the baby away and bring him back.

Auriluz: If you had the opportunity to receive something that would have made your pregnancy easier either before, during or after what would you like?

Participant 4: Honestly, I don't feel like it's been...like it's been pretty easy. I haven't been to work. There's like pros and cons like it's bad because I don't get to have a lot of contact with other people but I also have the benefit of not having to deal with what's going on at work... So I wouldn't ask for anything else.

Auriluz: Really quick to touch back on what I mentioned before about resources, are there any things that you may have heard about that you would like to have more information on or opportunities that others knew about that you would have liked to know, etc.?

Participant 4: Probably like yoga classes just because I want to do stay active like I mentioned earlier. I don't know I want to do anything that would make the process easier.

Auriluz: Well those are all of the questions for me. I want to open it up and see if there is any other information that you want to share, any feedback that you have on the questions?

Participant 4: Um. Honestly I don't know much when it comes to research. A lot of my reflection has been on I just the fear of bringing babies to the world where like everything is so uncertain you know.

Auriluz: Yeah of course and that's perfectly fine! We're living through such uncertain times I can only imagine how difficult and scary it all is. Thank you so much for participating. I really appreciate you and your honest answers. And that's all for me.

Auriluz: Thank you, no problem. I would like to see the research so you can send it to me.

Participant 4: Yeah, I'll make sure to do that. Have a great rest of your day.