

Binghamton University

The Open Repository @ Binghamton (The ORB)

New York City Maternal Health Oral History
Project

Dissertations, Theses and Capstones

5-1-2021

Interview transcript participant #05

Auriluz Pacheco

Follow this and additional works at: <https://orb.binghamton.edu/nyc-maternal-health-oral-history>

**NEW YORK CITY MATERNAL HEALTH ORAL HISTORY
PROJECT**

<https://orb.binghamton.edu/nyc-maternal-health-oral-history>

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT PARTICIPANT #05

Interviewer: Auriluz Pacheco

Date of Interview: May 1st, 2021

Location of Interview: New York, NY

NYC MHOP Interview Transcript #05

Transcribed by Auriluz Pacheco

Auriluz: It is May 1st, 2021, and today I am conducting an interview via Zoom, doing an oral history 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 5: Yes.

Auriluz: Okay thank you. Can I get your age please?

Participant 5: 30

Auriluz: Salary?

Participant 5: About 60,000

Auriluz: Ethnicity

Participant 5: Latina, I'm Colombian.

Auriluz: And then the last one is your highest level of education completed?

Participant 5: associates of applied science.

Auriluz: Location?

Participant 5: New York.

Auriluz: So are you currently pregnant? Or did you already give birth?

Participant 5: I'm currently pregnant, but I've also given birth.

Auriluz: Congratulations. , very exciting. When did you first find out you were pregnant? Was it before or during the shutdown? Do you know what month?

Participant 5: October.

Auriluz: So how are you currently feeling? And how were you feeling when you found out you were pregnant?

Participant 5: I guess the same I was when I found that I was pregnant. I was very excited because we were trying. But currently right now because I'm so far along and I have a toddler and I'm very tired.

Auriluz: Do you have any concerns moving forward? Around your health with like COVID related to the baby like your appointments, the baby? In general, if any?

Participant 5: In general, I'm just afraid that if I am asymptomatic and I happen to test positive and then they don't let me see my baby when I give birth like that would probably be one of my biggest like fears.

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

Participant 5: Um, yes, but I'm not sure how much I believe of everything. Oh, if you get COVID and your baby will pass away. If you get the vaccine, your baby's gonna pass away. Um, just things like that.

Auriluz: So a lot of fear mongering, more fearful than anything else.

Participant 5: Yeah.

Auriluz: What about professionally in terms of the doctors when you go into the appointments? And the nurses.

Participant 5: They all have their masks on so I haven't been so afraid. Like I haven't locked myself in my house. I've gone out, I go to restaurants, and I take my daughter to gymnastics. And because she's young enough she doesn't have to wear a mask so I feel like if where I'm bringing her she's safe than I should be safe and with my doctor I feel very comfortable there.

Auriluz: Have they spoken to you about COVID?

Participant 5: Um no, not really no.

Auriluz: So can you describe what your experience has been like to me in terms of appointments and going to see your doctor and just like accessing information and stuff?

Participant 5: My doctor is amazing and she's available anytime if I had any questions or if I had any kind of I felt like I was having a an emergency, I can just go there. I didn't even need an appointment if I was running late it would be okay. Um, the only thing is that they don't let your partner go with you. And because she's an hour away, it makes it a little harder. Like the further along I am, to make the drive by myself gets hard. And he's also wasn't able to be there for all the milestone ultrasounds and things like that and that was a little disappointing but um, it was something we understood.

Auriluz: So given that you found that you were pregnant in October was it the same type of attention then as it is now? Can you can you also elaborate on the differences between your experience with your first pregnancy and this one?

Participant 5: Ummm with the first pregnancy it was definitely a much different feeling just in general. The first one my husband was able to come with me to every appointment. It was very exciting we got to mood always go out and eat after but now this one is you kind of just, I don't feel alone because it's usually very quick appointments like 10 minutes in and out. But I do feel bad for my husband because I know he wants to be involved and see the baby on an ultrasound. And then like we don't get to do our like, oh, let's go to lunch after our appointment. Like kind of thing. So it's more of, it feels very like robotic like go by yourself get your blood pressure taken go home the end

Auriluz: Has your provider giving you any additional resources, given the current times.

Participant 5: Yes, he taught me for things to expect during our hospital stay like once we go in, we can't come back out. To make sure we pack like enough food for us and things that we would need because for the first pregnancy before COVID you can come and go if you wanted. It was like much different times. But now it's very like once you're in it's almost like you're locked in.

Auriluz: Are there any resources that you wish they have provided or you hope that they do provide for you when you give birth or right now?

Participant 5: Um, no, I feel like I'm, I'm well aware of the situation and what to expect.

Auriluz: With that, how knowledgeable would you say you are around your options regarding childbirth? So for example, midwives doulas natural births, C sections, etc.

Participant 5: I feel like I'm pretty knowledgeable on the route that I'm taking I'm very comfortable with how I'm going to be giving birth. Hopefully, it is in hospital and a natural birth, no complications.

Auriluz: And was that something that you communicated to the hospital?

Participant 5: Yes, my first pregnancy I was a little disappointed because the nurses had sent me home because they kept saying it's your first pregnancy. You're going to be in labor for a long time. And I wasn't dilating when I first went in. So they sent me home, but I live an hour like an hour away. So by the time I got home, my water had broken and I had to drive an hour back and I almost had the baby in the car. So like sighs a little like disappointed in the nurses. Acting like I was just like a typical textbook case. Like, oh yeah, new moms, they take forever go home. Um, so I didn't have the chance to have the epidural and then I gave birth within an hour, which I very much enjoyed that because you know, you don't have to worry about any back pain from the epidural and all those scary stories. So I'm hoping I'm gonna try to wait it out and see if my water breaks at home and then just raced down there. And hopefully everything goes smooth, and I did not have the baby in the car.

Auriluz: So then, in regards to resources, some of the things that other women look into would be like lactation courses or like exercise courses for like normal. What kind of resources would you want to receive or are looking into?

Participant 5: I had a very difficult time breastfeeding with my daughter, I did talk to a few lactation consultants, but it just it didn't seem to really help. I was also very new, and like on educated at that time, for my first pregnancy. But this one, I've done a lot more research, I don't think I would go to a lactation consultant I would use like who's in hospital at the time. But I wouldn't go to any classes. And I also never want to get to see if my daughter was like Tongue Tied or lip tied. But I also feel I wouldn't do that with the second baby. Like if breastfeeding just doesn't work out. And it's becomes a terrible experience. Again, I'm just gonna either pump and feed that way or formula feed.

Auriluz: What about that made it like a terrible experience? Was it just not something that you had known about? Because you mentioned that you felt like you were uneducated the first time. So what about the experience made you feel like you were an uneducated?

Participant 5: Well like, I couldn't get a good latch. I kept getting clogged ducts. It was just very painful. Like my nipples would bleed. They were sore. So every time I would like heal, then I would try to breastfeed again. And I would bleed and it just became so stressful that I wasn't I was only pumping and then bottle feeding her so we weren't even breastfeeding after a few weeks. But then it was like I had to keep waking up every four hours even though she slept through the night. And read and like pump and like I couldn't, I was so limited on where I can go and what you can eat still. And then having the clogged ducts is just so incredibly painful for me that I felt like I was starting to feel like depressed like I'm like four o'clock in the morning, pumping. Then you have to clean all this stuff. And it was just so exhausting when I could have actually been sleeping. So by then I noticed how I felt and I was just like this is making me feel very depressed and angry. And that's when I decided to stop. And then I just switched over to formula.

Auriluz: And were these conversations that you would have with your doctor?

Participant 5: No, we actually didn't. I didn't really ask about I just did all my own. I talked to a lot of my friends who are moms. And I just felt like I talked to a lot of my friends who are moms. And I just felt like I I don't know, oh, okay, I got this, yeah. And I just felt like, I have to experience other moments like that. In terms of like, wishing you had more information and control over things but not... not even just for breastfeeding.

Auriluz: Can you elaborate a little more on that? What are some things that you learned during your pregnancy experience? It can be any type of learning including this one even though it's a different situation, different circumstances. What are some things that you wish you had?

Participant 5: Well, I'll definitely brush up on breastfeeding and different techniques and different pumps and manual pumps and things like that. So I'm going to give it another try. But if in hospital with the new baby, I start bleeding, I'm going .I'm not even gonna go down that road again.

Auriluz: I'm sorry, would you be able to repeat that

Participant 5: So I learned, I've brushed up on like a lot, I like did a lot more research for breastfeeding and different pumps and finding like different methods and how to like resolve clogged ducts and things like that. But in hospital, if I bleed with this baby than the new baby, then I'm not going to breastfeed. Um, I've also learned that everyone has an opinion about a baby, and every baby is different. Even now from when I was pregnant with my first with my first to this one, the pregnancy in itself is so different. And you think, Oh, I was pregnant before, I know what to expect, I got this. And I feel like everyone, all of a sudden you have a kid or, you know, or they watch the kid. And all of a sudden, they're an expert. And you just thought textbooks are helpful, but nothing motherhood is textbook related. Like everything is different. And to learn to not let people put negative seeds in my head, like my daughter, she did not. She was like, a little late to start talking. But if you look at her environment, it was just me and her all day. And it's very quiet in my household. So she wasn't really, like motivated to speak. And now she talks at a level where she's almost a little advanced, but because people were so in my head, Oh, she should be saying this, she needs to be doing this, I went and got her evaluated, which also kind of makes you feel like you're doing something wrong. The speech pathologists are like there's nothing wrong with her. She's on mark for everything. She'll just talk when she's ready. So I feel like having especially like close family members, everyone wants to give an input. And it just kind of has to be what you feel works best for you, your child and you're in like home environment. And something else I've learned the most is patience. And just like just the more patient you are, and the more, at least for me with my daughter, the more patient I am the better. And the more I try to explain to her what I am wanting from her; it seems to work better than me just yelling at her like clean up your toys. I tried cleaning them up now, because then I don't want her to be afraid of me, I don't want her to, like think that cleaning is a negative thing. And there's always anger behind it. So when I explained to her, hey, let's clean up so you don't step on your toys and break them and then you won't hurt your foot. She's like, oh, okay, and then she goes and cleans up her stuff. So just like a whole different thought process on how to communicate with a little two year old.

Auriluz: So you mentioned that some of the information you've received in terms of adaptation was from your family members and your friends after you've had those conversations with them. So where have you been getting information from around maternal health now? Like during the shutdown before the shutdown, and hopefully, in the future and stuff.

Participant 5: My doctor had given me some pamphlets for some lactation consultants to call I haven't called them but I kind of looked into my hospitals, like pamphlets and things like that. And then I've done a lot of research on Pinterest. And it'll, like I'll be able to like click on a page and read like, what

works best for some moms, what moms recommend, what they don't recommend, and then I'll like further my research that way. Like, oh, I'll Google a product and read the reviews and see what people are saying. And with me my biggest problem was having clogged ducts. So then I went and I did a bunch of like Google research on what's the best method for clearing clogged ducts. How can you avoid it? Is there anything to avoid? That kind of thing.

Auriluz: How often were you in contact with your healthcare provider during COVID? And was it more frequent or less than before that you experienced on the first time motivate you to do things differently.

Participant 5: I would say I've been in contact about the same. I haven't had any like questions, I have had a very easy pregnancy, I haven't been sick, and I haven't had any scares. So there hasn't been anything that I have to like, hurry up and call her about. And then kind of just go with my instinct with what my body's telling me. So I wouldn't say is any more contact than previous?

Auriluz: What are some things that you thought would happen during this pregnancy that happened? Or something that you didn't think would happen?

Participant 5: Um, I didn't think that I would be out of commission, as early as I was with this pregnancy, because with my daughter, I have a very physical job. And I worked up until eight and a half months this pregnancy, like, four to six months, and I was like, wow, I really can't do much.

Auriluz: Okay, so they do. I think we mentioned this earlier. Did you ever have a conversation with your healthcare provider on COVID? And how did that go?

Participant 5: I'm not, we haven't really, like touch based on it. Like she asked if I wanted the flu vaccine and, and she just said, you know, make sure you get your exercise and you stay eating healthy, stay hydrated. But it was never like, okay, don't go outside and make sure you wash your hands. Watch out for COVID!

Auriluz: Was this surprising?

Participant 5: Um, no, I think it was just like this unwritten understanding, like, watch out for COVID.

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

Participant 5: Just if I'm asymptomatic, and they say I'm COVID positive. If they don't let me see my baby. I think I might freak it out.

Auriluz: Hopefully, that won't happen and you'll be fine. Is there anything that you would change about your experience?

Participant 5: Um, no. I'm fortunate enough to be able to be home and not have to work. And I feel like that shed a lot of light on what's really important to me and family time and everyone being home happy and healthy. So there's almost like a little bit of a positive to COVID. I guess, in that sense.

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

Participant 5: Um, that I don't want an epidural. But I know. If I get there early enough, they might, they might make me take one.

Auriluz: So in terms of like planning, what it is that you want? For example, if you say I don't want an epidural, would you not be able to establish that boundary? Now?

Participant 5: I will be able to, um, I just know that last time. I was like, Oh, I don't want an epidural. We'll see how it goes. But then like, the pain is so insane that you're like begging for it. So I just am afraid that with myself, I'm going to say, forget what I said give me this now. I'm hoping that doesn't happen.

Auriluz: If you had the opportunity to receive something that would have made your journey easier, what would you have like?

Participant 5: Oh, just for my husband to be able to come to appointments with me.

Auriluz: Would you be able to talk about motherhood and how that's been during COVID? You're actually the first person that I've interviewed that has had a baby prior to this one and it's really giving a lot of perspective. I wanted to see if you could talk to me a little bit about how your experience has differed between the two during these times.

Participant 5: The beginning of COVID during the first shutdown Well, I guess the only shutdown like all of a sudden that was it like no one was going out. My husband was like you're not going down to work in the city and in where you work, like you're not getting COVID you're not gonna bring it home for the baby to get sick, like, like, it was just such an unknown, like, scary time, like, Oh my God is there, crazy plague and we're all just gonna die. So we just stayed inside and my daughter would come with me everywhere. She would come with me to the grocery store and like we would just do things. And at this point, she was still young enough where she, like, she wasn't in gymnastics, she wasn't going to Gymboree or any of this stuff. So, I had just started her at Gymboree, and she and she seemed to have liked it. And then two weeks later, there was all of a sudden this crazy shutdown. And then she was inside, like we have a backyard and things like that. So we were able to still go outside and take walks and stuff. But I can see right away such a big difference in her behavior of just not going out and being social, like I would be the only one to go to the grocery store, come home, wife all everything, take a

shower, change my clothes, do the laundry. Like it was like insane, like, and then she started acting very, like bad because she just didn't have this outlet to go out and do anything. And I feel like that may have pushed her back a little bit. Because she's very shy. Um, so then I after the summer I said to my husband like we I can't keep her inside anymore. This is not fair to her is not good for her mental, like stability. So we put her in gymnastics, and then we started taking her back to Gymboree once everything opened. And it has made such an improvement, like in her behavior and her attitude and her like just awareness of life. And it's also good for me too, because I haven't been going to work for over a year now. Just randomly, I'd pick up days here and there, but just the social aspect. You know, it's good to just be out and do stuff and like you can't just stay locked up.

Auriluz: So it was also difficult for you to like navigate through that. You mentioned mental health.

Participant 5: I wouldn't say so much my mental health only because I really do like staying home and like sleeping all day. But it just it really I was very worried for my daughter. When I became a parent, it was just like supermom mode like I have to protect her and make sure she has everything she needs. And mental stimulation is I felt was like really lacking for her. And there's only so much like I can physically do. And I didn't want her to only become comfortable with just me. So I just started taking her back out and that made me feel better to see like, okay, that she's not inside throwing tantrums anymore because she needs a change of scenery like the days are smooth, I still get naps out of her. She still sleeps through the night. And she's getting a good social aspect.

Auriluz: Is there anything that you want to add that you want to share that you think it's important for other mothers who might read this or that you would like to add or recommend?

Participant 5: I would say for other mothers just, you know, trust your instinct, do what's best for your family, like you, your partner, your child, and if you're safe about it, and you're washing your hands and things like that, and you're not, jumping into a crowd of 100 people with no mask on and things like that. Like, just don't be afraid to go outside and change the scenery for yourself or your kids. You know, and just are patient and be aware. Like do your do the best you can to try to figure out like, what caused this change in my child? I feel like that would be a big part because I feel like a lot of moms now just put their kids on like iPads and then they just sit there and I feel like it's sort of like fresh air is important and outside and exercise is just so important for everyone.

Auriluz: Anything in terms of going into the hospitals and like seeking treatment, and medical care.

Participant 5: I feel like when you go to the hospital, you're just as much at risk as when you go to the grocery store. Like just, obviously have to follow hospital policy, but I think that they should still let you have like your support system with you if you have to go.

Auriluz: So important and sometimes a needed reminder. Thank you so much for your time and for the interview.

Participant 5: Definitely, you're welcome. I hope you have a nice rest of your day.

Auriluz: Likewise!