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### Interview transcript participant #10

Auriluz Pacheco

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

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INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT PARTICIPANT #10

Interviewer: Auriluz Pacheco

Date of Interview: May 15th, 2020

Location of Interview: New York, NY

NYC MHOP Interview Transcript #10

Transcribed by Auriluz Pacheco

**Auriluz:** It is May 16th, 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 10:** Of course.

**Auriluz:** Okay great, your age?

**Participant 10:** I am 31 years old.

**Auriluz:** Your salary?

**Participant 10:** My salary range? I actually don't know my salary.

**Auriluz:** It's okay, don't worry about it. Race?

**Participant 10:** I'm Hispanic.

**Auriluz:** Okay, borough?

**Participant 10:** I live in Brooklyn

**Auriluz:** Highest level of education completed.

**Participant 10:** I got my GED.

**Auriluz:** Okay, great. So are you currently pregnant? Or did you already give birth?

**Participant 10:** I'm currently pregnant.

**Auriluz:** When did you first find out that you were pregnant? Was it before or during the shutdown?

**Participant 10:** It was November when I found out I was pregnant. I'm six months pregnant.

**Auriluz:** Aw congratulations! How are you currently feeling? And how were you feeling weights do panned out earlier on, during COVID.

**Participant 10:** Now I'm feeling a bit better. In the beginning it was that I was tired a lot. I'm also I'm just getting, I'm just being able to eat now I wasn't able to eat a lot of foods that I normally eat. So I'm getting better.

**Auriluz:** were there any concerns that you had moving forward regarding like your health, the baby, your pregnancy appointments given COVID? And the circumstances that it's presenting?

**Participant 10:** Um, yes. Because there's a lot of like rules and regulations with COVID, now, they're trying to make woman, take COVID tests, or wear masks and do all these things. Being pregnant, trying to get the COVID vaccine and all these things that we didn't have to worry about before COVID. So, it's a little bit concerning, because I don't want to do these things, but I don't know what to do.

**Auriluz:** What are you referring to when you say you don't know what to do?

**Participant 10:** Well I had COVID right before I got pregnant. I know that like, supposedly when you get COVID, you have the antibodies. So they were trying to push for me to get the COVID vaccine being that I'm pregnant. And they keep pushing it on me, but I don't want to get it because I'm pregnant. I would rather wait until I give birth, if I decide to do that. And just like getting the COVID on, like getting tested and wearing a mask or something, during labor? Those are things I'm concerned about that I don't want to do.

**Auriluz:** Okay, and have you had these conversations with your doctor and stuff?

**Participant 10:** I did speak to her about not wanting the vaccine. And she said that she'll leave it. If I change my mind, later on, to just to let her know. So, I don't see the need for me to get the vaccine now. And she said they're still pushing for a pregnant woman to do it. Because if a woman gets cold blood while being pregnant, it's, it could cause harm, or, it could be bad because of, the baby. But I still haven't decided to do that yet.

**Auriluz:** Okay, so given that were there any things that you heard about COVID in relation to pregnancy and the way that it may impact you and or the baby?

**Participant 10:** Yes, so, I've researched and know aspirin, right? I don't think women take aspirin during pregnancy, but they're also trying to push for me to drink aspirin on a daily basis, supposedly because I had COVID and it can cause miscarriage Just or I don't know much, but they they're pushing for me to take aspirin because I had COVID. And they gave me the medicine and everything, but I haven't taken it so far.

**Auriluz:** And what did you say was the reason that you haven't taken it? It causes complications?

**Participant 10:** Yeah, if you look up, aspirin during pregnancy like it's not normally given. I actually went to the pharmacy to get it, but I picked the medicine up just to get it. But the pharmacist at the, I'm not sure if it was a Walgreens or whatever it was. She pulled me to the side. And she was like, aren't you pregnant? I'm like, yes. And she's like, so why are they giving you aspirin? I'm like they said, because I had COVID right before my pregnancy, for me to drink aspirin on a baby. She was like, no, I've never heard of that. I was like, I'm the doctor was saying there's some new research. And she was like, Huh, I would ask again, I was like, yeah, I'm not gonna drink them. I'm just picking them up just to pick them up. But I'm not gonna be drinking aspirin.

**Auriluz:** Oh, that's odd.

**Participant 10:** But she was like it's a new research and all these things. And it's like, why would I you know?

**Auriluz:** So can you describe what your experience has been like, to me from the moment you found that you were pregnant? Up until like now, and in terms of like, anything, so how you felt getting access to appointments in your doctor? Things that you've learned, etc?

**Participant 10:** Yes. So, when I found out I was very nervous. Being the whole pandemic, and everything and things are harder, I actually feel like, yeah, I had my first son through this clinic, I have an eight year old, and they were very functional. Now, they're like, all over the place and dysfunctional there. They're canceling appointments and everything like that. So it gets a bit frustrating, and overwhelming. Health wise, I don't know. Because if I had COVID I feel a bit out of breath sometimes, but like I said I'm getting better now as I'm getting further along. But I have difficulty breathing. And I'm not eating a lot like I used to. I don't eat chicken. I don't know if it's because of COVID. Or maybe just my pregnancy. I'm not eating a lot of meat. Everything smells weird to me, and even tastes funny. So I'm adapting to, eating just vegetables, or fruits or plain rice, and things like that. I'm getting better.

**Auriluz:** You spoke a little bit about your appointments and the attention that you were receiving and how it's not be the same? And how it seems a little bit all over the place? Would you be able to elaborate more on that?

**Participant 10:** Nope, appointments are so like far out. And also, when I go, the wait is so long, it's like, what's the point of having a two o'clock appointment? If you're waiting there for an hour? Or, more than an hour. They're not doing sonograms. I mean, being that I had a child already, they they were like, is different now. They don't do many sonograms on me. So I don't know. I'm sure the baby is fine. But I can't see him. I'm seeing different doctors. I mean, I know that there are many doctors that you see, but it's like, I always get a different doctor. I don't

know, one doctor specifically so it's different in that sense. It's just like, sometimes I want to change my clinic to see it's just this clinic or it's in general with the whole COVID situation. Also my partner can't come in my visits with me. So that's frustrating as well. And it's very strict.

**Auriluz:** Okay, and have they given you like, any additional resources? I know, you mentioned that you were pregnant before. They have an eight year old. So was there any different treatment or resources that were offered to you then that aren't being offered to you now? Or are being offered to you now?

**Participant 10:** Yes. Before they didn't offer me any services, like doula services and things like that. Also, they're giving me like, breast pumps and compression socks. Things to wrap my belly after I give birth. I never was offered that before. And this is the same clinic and now they're offering it to me. So I can have a doula with me, a midwife, the doctors there and my partner when I give birth.

**Auriluz:** Okay, that's good. So are there any additional resources you wish that they provided you with?

**Participant 10:** At this point, no.

**Auriluz:** Is there anything that you're looking forward to getting maybe after your pregnancy? I know you mentioned that now they're giving, doulas and midwives but what about postpartum?

**Participant 10:** I know, postpartum I'm not sure if the doula will be able to stay with me, um, I have a friend who's actually a doula, and she gave me this pack of laws describing your laws and things like that. There are things that you could tell your doctor that you want and don't want. So I want to be able to give birth a certain way, I want to be able to delay cutting my, the umbilical cord from me to my child for a while, a lot of things that I know that if you don't voice your opinion to the doctors or, or even tell them that, these things, they will just do whatever they want. So, there are a lot of things that I still haven't presented to my doctor that I want to do. by me, she knows I know, a little bit of things, because I did tell her that I have a friend who's a doula, so it's gonna be different from my first birth because I was a bit young and naive, like, I didn't know, and research a lot of things that I didn't know. So hopefully, when I give birth, it'll be smooth, and hopefully, they will listen to what it is that I want.

**Auriluz:** Okay, so can you tell me a little bit more about the type of birth that you intend on having and how you want it to go?

**Participant 10:** Yes, I, my first son it was a natural birth, but I did have an epidural. So it wasn't fully natural in the sense of it was a vaginal birth, but I still had some type of medicine, this time around, I want to try to do it without an epidural. And also, I want to be able to stand or, go against, like, when we give birth, we're laying down. So we're like, kind of going against gravity. So I want to be able to be on force or even be standing up to push my beat, like, while I'm up, so gravity is going down, as I push my baby, instead of being laying down or even a what a birth, something of that nature. I want to do something like that.

**Auriluz:** Okay and do you want to do that in the hospital, at home, a birthing center? Do you know?

**Participant 10:** I know that in the hospital, they offer some kind of services. I would have to ask them if they offer a water birth kind of thing? But, yeah, I don't mind doing it in the hospital. I just want them to tend to what it is. I know that they're the doctors, but also, a woman's body knows where to push itself to. So I'm hoping that, things go well and give birth that way.

**Auriluz:** You mentioned that you've learned a lot from your first pregnancy and on the way from and during the time between this pregnancy and the last one. So how knowledgeable would you say you are around your options around during childbirth? And like before and after in terms of the thing that you should be getting.

**Participant 10:** So when having my first child, I knew nothing at all. I just knew I was pregnant, I'm going to give birth. I was just, like, I didn't know anything. I didn't read about anything. I didn't know the troubles that women can go through. I didn't know about preeclampsia. I didn't know about any of these things that could happen to a woman during birth. Versus now there's so much. I mean, I don't know if it's because I'm older. And now I'm reading up on these things that women go through, so many things. Especially women of color, go through more problems, giving birth versus anyone else. But it's not talked to you by your doctors. It's scary but not knowing is too.

**Auriluz:** So, where have you been getting your information from? Like, your family, your friends, medical-

**Participant 10:** My friend. I'm actually trying to look for this birth right package that my good friend who's a doula set up for me. If you could just give me one second. Yeah. Give me one second. I'm getting it right now. Okay.

**Auriluz:** Yeah, take your time.

**Participant 10:** Hi. Yeah, so I found that.

**Auriluz:** Okay, so do you want to tell me what's in the book?

**Participant 10:** I'll just go over a few things because it is really detailed. For one, like I said earlier, I wanted to delay cord clamping, right, because the entire, all the blood and nutrients that's in your placenta has to go to your baby. And I know that when I gave birth to my first son, they cut that cord right away. So I know that my son didn't get all the nutrients, and all the blood that he should be getting from, from my placenta to him. So I had delayed cord clamping, I have the right to delay cord clamping for as long as I fit for my baby's health, without being pressured to cut my umbilical cord. It's just a whole bunch of rights that you should know. And if you don't know, and if you don't speak this language, or even give them this material, they'll just, do what they want with you.

**Auriluz:** That's so great and what's the book called?

**Participant 10:** The guide. She made it, she made it herself. But it's called My Rights over My Birth. Legal Notice after that affidavit of truth. So she goes into things like labor and delivery, newborn care, child protection services, just a whole bunch of things that she goes over and puts in this book. And if you have, it's adopted and they would have to listen to this. Just have to say I signed it and it's notarized.

**Auriluz:** Oh, that's really cool. I never heard about something like that.

**Participant 10:** Yeah, so this is another one. When the baby is born, they put this like, I ointment in their eyes right? And I've always wondered what is that I meant for but you give birth, the doctors cut the cord, put this ointment in their eyes, they get a shot and it's like \*pause\*. This here says, no, I do not consent to this ointment .I do not have Chlamydia, I do not have Gonorrhea. These antibiotics have a negative impact on the normal micro bio Flora of the human gut. My newborns immune system is extremely vulnerable. His or her immune system is still developing an introduction introducing necessary antibiotics can alter the composition of microbial populations leading to other illnesses. So you know, if you don't have Chlamydia or Gonorrhea, there's no reason to put this out. Women aren't your child. So basically, that's what that woman is for.

**Auriluz:** I don't even know they did that for that reason. I wonder what's the history behind it is.

**Participant 10:** They do.

**Auriluz:** Is there anything else in the book that you want to share? Or you thought was cool?

**Participant 10:** Yes, breastfeeding immediately after birth. They did this for me for my first son, I know that they as soon as the baby was born, they put them on my chest, and he was able to breastfeed but you know, some doctors, they take the baby away from you. So here it also says I'm breastfeeding immediately after birth. I will breastfeed immediately after birth. I do not consent to baby formula, which is toxic, or pacifiers. This will cause nipple confusion if I experienced difficult fees during breastfeeding. I like to consult with a lactation specialist for assistant. It's just like, very in depth about shots and vaccines. I know to each his own, some people don't mind giving their newborns vaccines, but other people are opposed to it. And the doctors or nurses will try to push it on you unless you know your language, then you can tell them like no.

**Auriluz:** You just gave a lot of new things you learned from this book that's really exciting. Do you want to hone in on what are some new things that you learned during your pregnancy? And what are some things you wish you had known prior to becoming pregnant?

**Participant 10:** I wish I would've known all of the information that I know now. Like I said, I didn't know having an epidural may cause delay in birth or I don't know, just a lot of things. Like, for example, they give you a hepatitis B vaccine. They do all these vaccines and things for newborns. And if you're not infected with hepatitis B virus, what is the reason for your baby to get this? It's a newborn baby. Um, I just saw my doctor; I want to say it was on Thursday. But before that, I haven't seen the doctor since, March, I want to say and it wasn't even my doctor, I went to go get on a sonogram to know the baby's gender. And she said being that I was there, and they did blood work at that clinic, that she didn't really have to see me. We had like a zoom phone call. And she just asked me about my hope over the phone. So, I wish I would've known things would have been so impersonal.

**Auriluz:** So do you feel comfortable with it being on telehealth?

**Participant 10:** I wasn't, I wasn't, it just felt weird. I know that if this COVID thing wasn't going on that I will be seen more often. But now it's like, oh, we'll just do a zoom, call, or a video call. And I'll just ask you all the questions over the phone, unless you feel some type of way, then you'll come into the office, but it doesn't feel normal.

**Auriluz:** You mentioned that you were going to be given birth in a hospital. But you also mentioned some questions or a little bit of pushback against the doctors or the information that is that they're providing and stuff. So do you feel safe in medical settings?

**Participant 10:** Honestly, I don't feel safe in medical settings. I wish I could give birth at home, but it's also scary. How about if something does happen, and then you do need that medical

attention? So that's the only reason I'm gonna go give birth at a hospital, but under my rules and how I prefer.

**Auriluz:** So is there something you wish you could tell your hospital going into it now?

**Participant 10:** I don't know if I will tell them something until it's a spur of the moment and I feel any negligence or I feel like anything weird, I would then tell them and express myself, versus I didn't know how to express myself before. Now, I do.

**Auriluz:** You think that plays a big role in the treatment that women receive?

**Participant 10:** 100% 100%. I feel like, if you don't know anything, they're just gonna just do whatever it is that they want to want with you. And unfortunately, a lot of women are not, don't have a lot of knowledge and what is giving birth and the rights that they have?

**Auriluz:** If you had the opportunity to receive something that would have made your journey easier, or the last few months, what would you have liked?

**Participant 10:** I know that they offer doula services. It would have been nice if the doula could visit you at home.

**Auriluz:** Have you had that conversation with your doula or you don't think they offer that

**Participant 10:** It's hard. I have yet to meet her. I know that they offered me doula services. And I told them that I do want to do that, but I haven't met her yet.

**Auriluz:** Do you know when you're going to meet her?

**Participant 10:** They haven't told me and honestly, I haven't asked, but I will ask and see how long would it take for me to meet her and what are the services. I said before that I gave birth at the same place with my son and he's eight years old, so they offer this service to me because my health insurance now covers it. So I do have health first, which is with Medicaid, so they're covering that for me.

**Auriluz:** Oh okay, that's great. That's basically covered and you don't have to worry about that. Do you do like co payments and stuff?

**Participant 10:** No, no co payments, I only do co payments for like, if I have medicine, it'll be like, \$5 depending on the medicine, but nothing too expensive that I can't handle.

**Auriluz:** Is there anything that you want to add? Anything that you wish we spoke about, or just like any general advice that you want to give to other women that may see these interviews and seek inspiration around like what they want to do when their pregnancy experiences.

**Participant 10:** I would say if you know your rights and things like that, you can always tell your doctor what is it that you want, because at the end of the day, it's your body and it's your child. Unless it's a medical emergency then it's out of your hands. It is what it is. But other than that, look up tools and do your research on what it is you want and how you feel safe or comfortable giving birth.

**Auriluz:** Thank you so much. Is there anything that you want to add?

**Participant 10:** No, I think we kind of covered everything. I hope you interview me in the future. I'll tell you how my second birth went. .

**Auriluz:** I hope it goes really well and that you have a good experience.

**Participant 10:** Yes, thank you.

**Auriluz:** No problem. I'll be having the rest of your day.

**Participant 10:** You too.