



Health Disparities in the Context of a Parenting and Pregnancy Support Program for Incarcerated Mothers

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Introduction

- Since 1991, the number of incarcerated mothers in the US has more than doubled. In 2007, an estimated 1.7 million children had a parent incarcerated in a state or federal prison.¹
- It is estimated that 6-10% of women are pregnant when they enter prison.¹
- Compared to the general population, incarcerated women experience higher rates of mental (e.g., depression) and physical (e.g., HIV) health problems.² Pregnant prisoners face greater risk and often experience poor or inadequate prenatal care.

Program



Isis Rising is a pregnancy and parenting support program offered to inmates at the women's prison (MCF-Shakopee).

The program is comprised of two interrelated components:

1. New Moms Group

- Available to all women at the prison who are pregnant, have given birth within the last year, or are parenting children under 5 years of age.
- Weekly, 2-hour sessions are facilitated by trained doulas who teach a 12-week curriculum designed to provide social and emotional support, and increase women's knowledge about pregnancy and parenting.

2. Doula Program

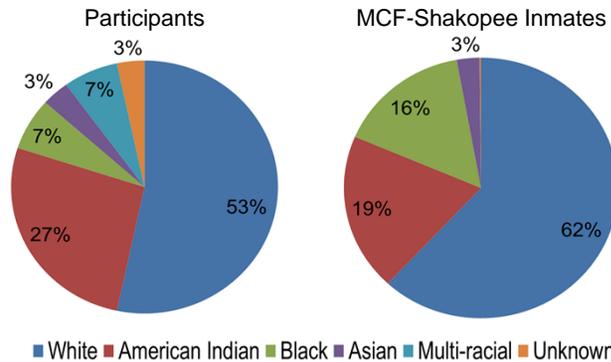
- Pregnant women involved in the New Moms Group are matched with a doula.
- Women meet with their doulas individually at least once per month. Meetings involve prenatal education, birth planning, and emotional support.
- Doulas meet the mothers at the hospital and provide support during labor and delivery, and during the post-partum period. Doulas are also present for support when mothers are separated from their babies.

Participants

- To date, 43 mothers have participated in the New Moms Group, 11 (26%) of whom were pregnant and also participated in the Doula Program.

		New Moms Group	Doula Program
Q1	Oct. - Dec. 2011	16	6
Q2	Jan. - March 2012	7	2
Q3	April - June 2012	7	0
Q4	July - Sept. 2012	13	3
Total		43	11

- Participants ranged in age from 21 to 40 years old ($M = 27.17$, $SD = 5.19$ years).
- Participants had between one and nine children ($M = 2.53$, $SD = 1.72$).



Results

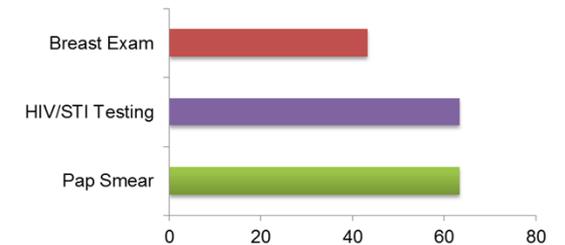
Mental Health

- Nearly two-thirds of mothers reported being diagnosed with a mental health problem; depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder were among the most common.
- The average CES-D score was 22.14 (Range 1-47), considerably above the clinical cut-off (=16). More than half of mothers had symptoms in the clinical range.

Physical Health

- One in five mothers reported having a chronic health condition (e.g., high blood pressure).

Percent of Women who Received Health Services in Last Year



- Women reported their satisfaction with the health care that they had received ranging from 1 (not satisfied) to 5 (very satisfied). On average, women were moderately satisfied with the health care they received ($M = 2.93$, $SD = 1.17$).

Discussion

- Participants reported high levels of mental and physical health concerns.
- Additional analyses will examine participants' changes in health concerns over time, and explore the experiences and outcomes of pregnant mothers, in particular.

Translation

- By providing mothers physical and emotional support in the context of their incarcerations, Isis Rising has the potential to improve both maternal and child health.
- Future studies should examine a jail-based model of Isis Rising for women serving shorter sentences in county jails.
- We anticipate that future funding for Isis Rising will come from both private foundations (e.g., W. K. Kellogg) and federal agencies (e.g., Maternal and Child Health Bureau).

References
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²Fazel, S., & Baillargeon, J. (2011). The health of prisoners. *The Lancet*, 377 (9769), 956-965.

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