

Family planning intentions and satisfaction with contraceptive care: A qualitative exploration of postpartum Latina women in North Carolina

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Executive Summary

North Carolina has one of the fastest growing Latino populations in the United States, and Latinas are twice as likely to have an unintended pregnancy compared with the Caucasian population. Health care providers caring for this population have limited knowledge on how to address the family planning needs of this population, including what influences Latinas to select a specific type of birth control method.

Using one-on-one interviews, we explored three domains relating to Latina women who had recently delivered a baby. Interview topics included the desired number of children; the influence of family and friends in the desired family size and choice of contraception; and the overall satisfaction with contraceptive care. We chose to interview 10 Mexican immigrants and 10 first-generation Mexican-Americans to see if there was an effect of acculturation, or amount of time spent in the U.S.

Almost all of the twenty women interviewed wanted between 2-4 children with 2-5 years between births. Family size was influenced by partners, but not by friends or other family members. Many participants wanted to delay the birth of their next child to maximize the health and development of their current child(ren). Participants' friends and female family members were highly influential in assisting them select birth control methods, including the most effective forms of birth control. Participants did not perceive prejudice and felt that there was appropriate cultural sensitivity in the prenatal and birth control care they received.

Latinas in North Carolina desire a specific number of children, and this family size may be smaller than providers assume. Latinas are receiving culturally sensitive contraceptive care, but friends and family may be as influential as medical sources when Latinas select a form of birth control.