



The Los Angeles Mommy and Baby Project

Healthy Mommies and Healthy Babies



Maternal, Child, and Adolescent Health Programs, October 2012

HOMELESSNESS DURING PREGNANCY 2005 - 2010 LOS ANGELES MOMMY AND BABY SURVEY

Why is Homelessness Important

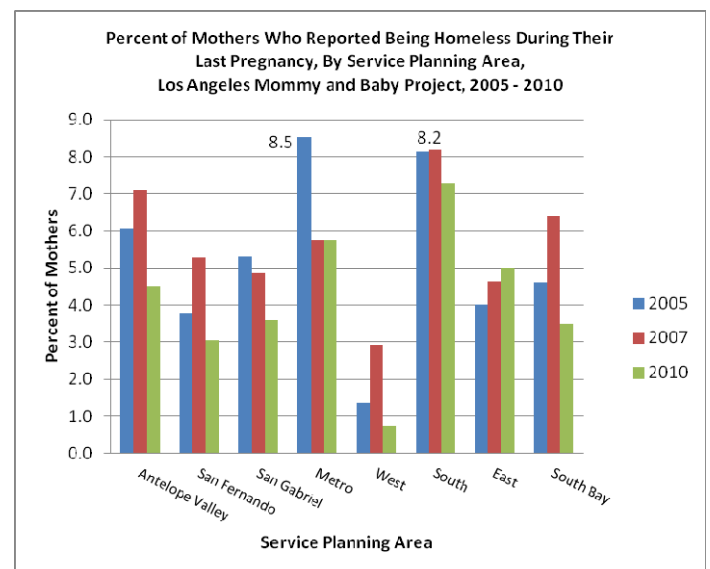
Homelessness during pregnancy puts mothers at an increased risk for chronic and infectious diseases, mental illness, substance abuse, and intimate partner violence.¹ According to the CDC, one in every twenty five women was homeless the year prior to having a live birth. Although research shows that homelessness is a risk factor during pregnancy, information in Los Angeles County is limited. This brief reviews the 2005, 2007, and 2010 Los Angeles Mommy and Baby (LAMB) Projects survey data for risk factors associated with homelessness during pregnancy and adverse birth outcomes among women in Los Angeles County. Data from the 2005, 2007, and 2010 LAMB cycles were used to describe the trends in homelessness among pregnant women and mothers who recently gave birth. More detailed analyses focused on data from the 2010 LAMB Project.

About LAMB

The LAMB project is a bi-annual population-based survey conducted by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, Maternal, Child, and Adolescent Health Programs. The survey asks mothers who recently delivered a live baby in Los Angeles County about events that happened before, during, and after their pregnancy via telephone or mail. Since the inception of LAMB, approximately 6,000 mothers have responded to the survey each project year. The County has been divided into eight geographical regions known as Service Planning Areas (SPA). The LAMB data can be presented by SPA to help assess data trends and to effectively target services that improve maternal and infant health.

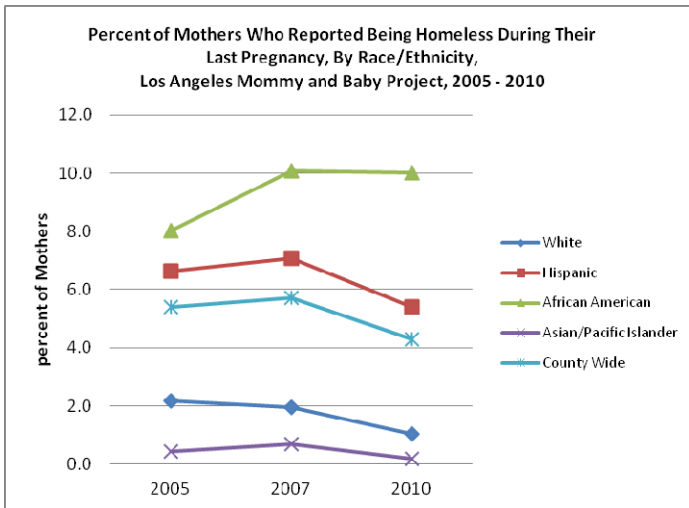
Prevalence of Homelessness

To measure homelessness sometime during pregnancy, respondents were asked the following question in the LAMB survey, “During your last pregnancy were you homeless?”



- Between 2005 and 2010, an average of 5.1% of mothers in Los Angeles County were homeless (about 8,000 women per year) at some point during their last pregnancy.
- In most geographic regions (with the exceptions of San Gabriel and Metro SPAs), rates of homelessness, at some point during a woman’s last pregnancy, increased from 2005 to 2007. The rates decreased substantially in 2010 to rates below those in 2005. South SPA had the highest rates in both 2007 and 2010.
- Rates of homelessness during pregnancy decreased between 2005 and 2010 for all racial/ethnic groups except for African Americans.
- The rate of homelessness during pregnancy for African American women was ten times greater than that of White women in 2010.

¹ Rickelle Richards, PhD, MPH, RD, Ray M. Merrell, PhD, MPH, MS, Laurie Baksh, MPH. Health Behaviors and Infant Health Outcomes in Homeless Pregnant Women in the United States. American Academy of Pediatrics 2011.



- 50% of mothers who were homeless during their last pregnancy had less than a high school education.
- 34% of mothers who were homeless had a high school diploma or an equivalent degree and 17% had greater than a high school education.
- At delivery, 44% of homeless mothers were never married but lived with the baby’s father and 31% were married.
- 50% of mothers who reported homelessness were between 25-34 years of age, 25% were between 20-24 years of age, and 13% were under the age of 20.

Factors Associated with Homelessness Los Angeles Mommy and Baby Project, 2010

| | Homeless | Not Homeless | p-value |
|--|----------|--------------|---------|
| PRENATAL CARE (PNC) | | | |
| Started PNC later than Desired | 20.4 | 14.6 | 0.1058 |
| Received Adequate PNC (Kotelchuck) | 72.1 | 82.5 | 0.0253 |
| RISK BEHAVIORS DURING PREGNANCY | | | |
| Smoked During Pregnancy | 9.4 | 2.3 | <.0001 |
| Illicit Drug Use During Pregnancy | 10.0 | 5.0 | 0.0181 |
| Food Insecurity During Pregnancy | 34.9 | 10.5 | <.0001 |
| Physical Abuse During Pregnancy | 7.2 | 2.0 | 0.0034 |
| Any Abuse During Pregnancy | 21.5 | 14.1 | 0.0206 |
| MEDICAL PROBLEMS DURING PREGNANCY | | | |
| Preterm Labor | 19.7 | 15.9 | 0.2772 |
| Fetal Growth Restriction | 8.7 | 2.9 | 0.0081 |
| Cervix Sewn | 5.6 | 2.6 | 0.0988 |
| Bacterial Vaginosis | 20.0 | 14.7 | 0.1205 |
| POSTPARTUM AND INFANT HEALTH | | | |
| Still Breast Feeding at 3 Months | 54.2 | 60.3 | 0.2376 |
| Had a Postpartum check up | 84.6 | 91.6 | 0.0083 |
| Currently reading to baby | 60.3 | 71.7 | 0.0116 |

- Homeless mothers were less likely to receive adequate Prenatal Care, have a postpartum check-up, continue breastfeeding at 3 months, and be currently reading to their baby.
- Homeless mothers were more likely to have smoked (9.4% vs. 2.3%) and used illicit drugs (10.0% vs. 5.0%) while pregnant.
- Compared to non-homeless mothers, homeless mothers were more likely to suffer from physical, mental, and emotional abuse.
- Homeless mothers were more likely to have food insecurity while pregnant (34.9% vs. 10.5%) compared to mothers who were not homeless.
- 13.6 % of pregnant women who were homeless had a preterm birth compared to 9.4% of pregnant women who were not homeless.

Public Health Implication

- Between 2005 and 2010, one in every twenty women in Los Angeles County was homeless during their last pregnancy. Women who are homeless during pregnancy tend to be older and less educated. African American women were ten times as likely as White women to be homeless.
- Homelessness during pregnancy presents many challenges for mothers, infants, and health care providers. Women who experience homelessness during pregnancy are at an increased risk for poor birth outcomes, pregnancy complications, and violence. Homelessness presents difficulties for both the mothers and their providers to maintain adequate pre and postnatal care.

What Can Be Done?

What Can Individuals do?

- Contact the 2-1-1 Information and Referral Services to receive access to resources, referrals, and guidance/support in your area.

What Can Providers do?

- Increase your awareness on the 2-1-1 Information and Referral Services so that you can provide information to your clients on where to receive further assistance.
- If you have a large homeless client base, it is recommended that you participate in a local homeless coalition.

What Can Communities and Policy Makers do?

- Become aware of homelessness in your community by participating in local homeless coalitions. Involvement in these coalitions will allow you to voice your concerns and determine resolutions to the current homeless issue in your community.

- Assist in identifying and applying for funding opportunities to develop housing and supportive services for homeless pregnant women.
- Participate in coalitions and initiatives like the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA), Homeless Count Project and the United Way Home for Good Project.
- Assist in advocating and developing resources for pregnant women who are homeless in your district. It is also recommended that you work to prevent outsourcing of resources into other districts.
- Ensure the dissemination of the 2-1-1 Information and Referral Services to providers and community members.

It is important to reach out to homeless pregnant women to ensure that they receive services meeting their specialized needs so they can have healthy pregnancies and deliver healthy babies.

Data Analyses & Limitation

All analysis was conducted using SAS 9.2 and weighted to represent the experiences of all women who delivered in each of those years. Data from LAMB is based on participant self report and collected among women who had a live birth. It should be noted that the survey asked mothers whether they were homeless at some point during their last pregnancy and they may not have been homeless at the time of the survey. The survey required a mailing address and telephone number to administer and collect the results, therefore the project may not have been able to reach mothers who were homeless at the time of the survey. As such, the analyses may result in under-representation of homeless women during pregnancy in Los Angeles County.

For additional information about LAMB, please visit: www.lalamb.org

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Resources

For more information on the 2-1-1 Information and Referral Services for LA County, please visit <http://www.211la.org>

To view the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) for Homeless Initiatives and/or to receive Resources and Hotel Vouchers in your community, please visit <http://lahsa.org>

To learn more about Homelessness and how it may affect the individual, family, and community, please visit http://homeless.lacoe.edu/documents/homeless_referral_guide.pdf to access a Referral Guide for Homeless Children, Youth, and Families.

For more information on how to access shelter, health, and food resources for the homeless, please visit the Los Angeles Homeless Resource site at

http://lahomeless.wikia.com/wiki/Los_Angeless_Homeless_Resource_Wiki

To receive assistance on locating housing and resources for affordable special needs and emergency housing, please visit the Los Angeles County Housing Resource Center at

<http://housing.lacounty.gov/index.html>

Pregnant teen mothers who are homeless can receive quality, comprehensive services from St. Anne's. For more information, please visit www.stannes.org

For a list of shelters available for women, please visit the womens shelter document on the public counsel website. This can be found at: <http://www.publiccounsel.org/tools/publications/files/womens-shelters-2.pdf>

Residential supportive services are available for homeless adult pregnant women at the Precious Life Shelter. For more information, please visit www.preciouslifeshelter.org

If you are pregnant and facing a crisis, like homelessness, the Harvest Home provides a warm, stable environment for women to receive food, shelter, and clothes. For more information, please visit www.theharvesthome.net

For information on Homeless Emergency Shelters in the Glendale area, please visit www.glendalemethodist.org/homelessemergencyshelters

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