

Perinatal Mental Health Issues for the LGBTQ Community



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Disclosures

- No financial disclosures

Objectives

- Understand unique obstetrical issues for the LGBTQ community
- Assess whether your obstetric practice is welcoming/inclusive to LGBTQ patients and their partners
- Be aware of strategies to be more welcoming/inclusive for LGBTQ parents

Case



Alex is a 37 yo G1P0 genderqueer/transgender man who presents with an IUP at 10 weeks for his first prenatal visit. His husband Tom, who is cisgender, is with him. Alex stopped taking his testosterone 8 months ago in hopes of getting pregnant. He had been considering chest surgery but did not have it done yet. His BMI is 31.

Question for Your Duo

What advocacy/education would you need to do within your own practice setting to be able to provide culturally sensitive prenatal, delivery and postpartum care?

Gaybe Boom

- Two to six million children in the United States are being raised by LGBTQ parents
- Which state has the highest percentage of LGBT couples raising children?

Williams Institute, UCLA

Metro Areas with Highest % of SS Couples Raising Children

- Salt Lake City
- Virginia Beach
- San Antonio
- Memphis
- Detroit

Williams Institute, UCLA

Lesbian Women and Birth

- About 16% of lesbians have given birth
(Cochran, 2001)

Bisexual Women

- Difficult to document
- Definition of bisexual
- Health issues in general
 - increased risk vs. lesbian and heterosexual women
 - recent study of postpartum depression

Reproductive Options for Lesbians

- Insemination by known or unknown donor
(donor ID release option at age 18 of child)
- Intercourse
- Co-IVF in which one partner donates an egg by IVF, egg is fertilized in the lab with sperm, and the embryo is placed in the uterus of her partner

Children of Lesbian Couples

- No difference in sexual orientation, self-esteem or emotional health compared to heterosexual parented children
- Children of lesbian couples appeared to be less aggressive, more nurturing, more tolerant of diversity, more androgynous, less behavior issues as teens

Reproductive Options for Gay and Bisexual Men

Intercourse

Insemination with female gestational carrier or intended female parent

Surrogacy by IVF via egg donor and gestational carrier

If partnered, mixing of sperm prior to IVF or insemination

Reproductive Options for Bisexual Women

- Intercourse
- Same as those for lesbian women

Reproductive Options for Bisexual People

- Conception within heterosexual relationship
- Options described under lesbian for women
- Options described under gay men for men

MTF Reproductive Potential

- If a transwoman is not taking hormones, she can use her sperm to conceive.
- If she's been taking hormones longer than 6 months, she might resume sperm production if she pauses for at least 4 months, but there are no guarantees.
- She can give her partner live sperm, or go through a sperm bank (possibly she stored sperm prior to transitioning).
- Hormones used for transition have not been shown to cause any chromosomal damage.

FTM Reproductive Potential

- If a transman is not taking hormones, he can use his ovaries and/or uterus to conceive.
- If he's been taking hormones long enough to stop menstruating, he might resume gamete production if he pauses, but there are no guarantees.
- He can use his partner's sperm, or go through a sperm bank, or his partner can carry his ovum.
- Hormones used for transition have not been shown to cause any chromosomal damage.

Birthplace

- Home Birth
- Free-standing Birth Center
- Hospital Birth
 - L and D nurses
 - Inclusive for family of choice
 - Lactation support/choices

Legal Aspects

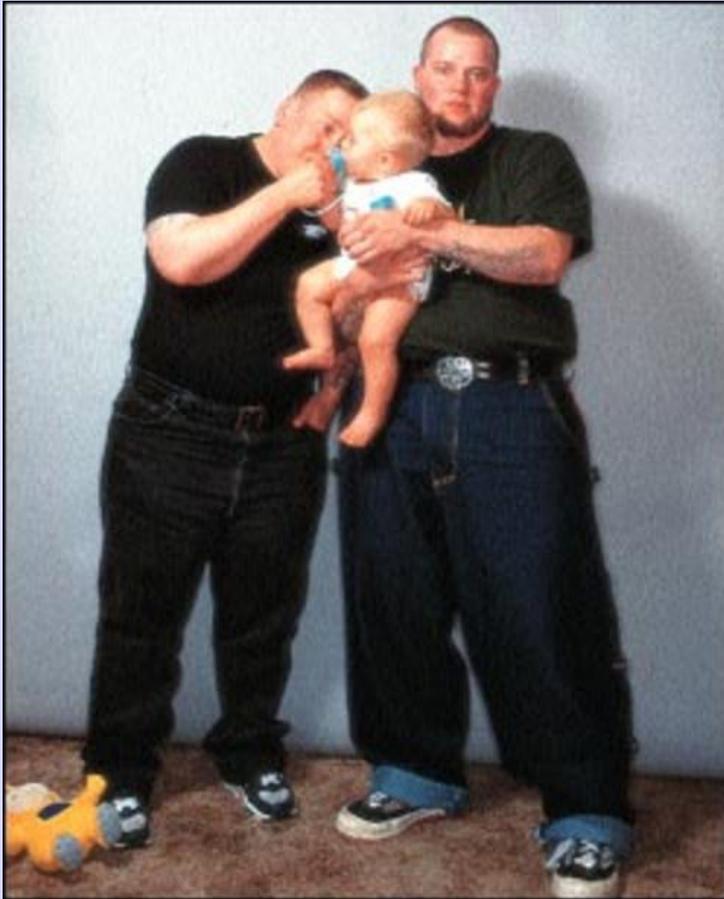
- Packet available at the National Center for Lesbian Rights
- Issues: if in a couple - parenting rights for each member of the couple, guardian in case of parental death or severe disability, effect of individual state laws on these issues
- Obtain legal counsel prior to conception

Family Constellations

Many Different Family Constellations
including Blended Families

Do Not Assume Anything: Ask!

Trans-friendly images

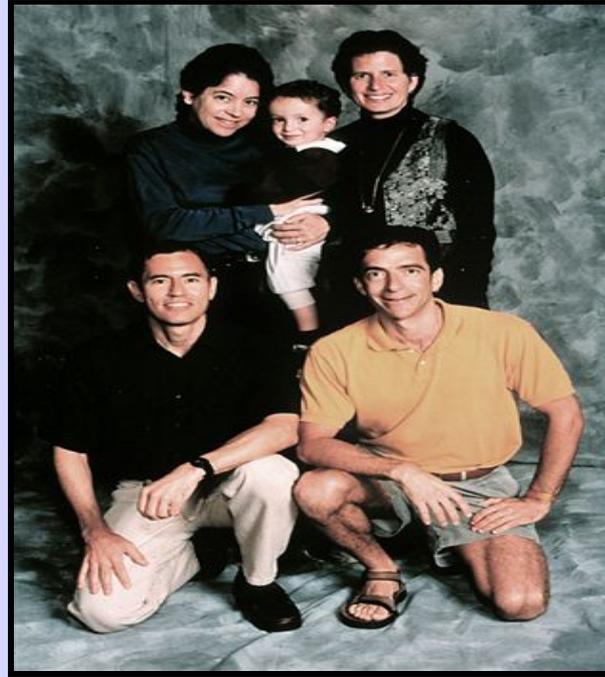


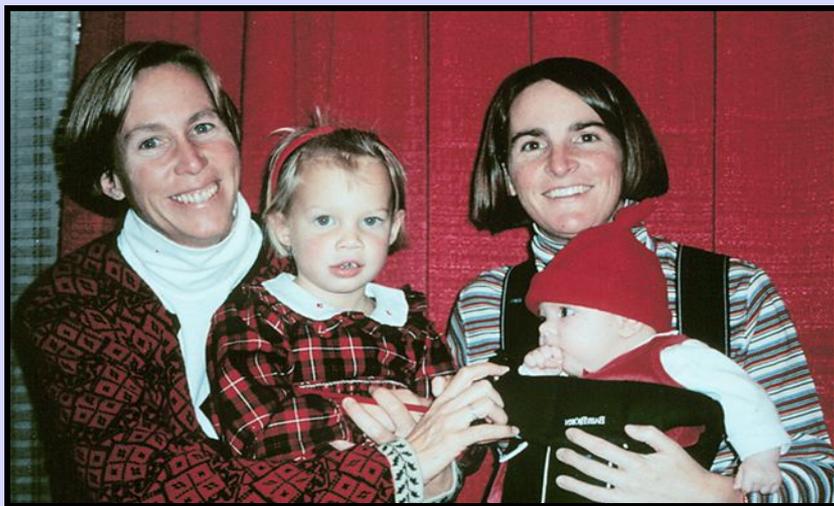
Patrick, Blake, and Matt (2000)

Thomas Beatie (2008)









Postpartum Depression

Up to the first year postpartum

- Increased prevalence of depression in the LGBTQ community (psychotherapy preferred)
- Screening/Diagnosis
- Treatment
- Partner postpartum depression
- Family Support

Breastfeeding/Chestfeeding

- Lesbians as a group met the American Academy of Pediatrics goal: exclusive breastfeeding for 6 months (Gartrell)
- Induction of lactation in non-pregnant female is possible but time-consuming
- SES system for chestfeeding for males

Same-Sex Marriage

- In MA and CA, same-sex marriage has led to fewer mental health care visits and expenditures for gay men and has reduced psychological distress among LGB adults in legally recognized same-sex relationships
- In states with legislation against same-sex marriage, increased anxiety disorders, psychological co-morbidities, and substance use

Tips for a Welcoming Practice

- Inclusive forms and office in-take forms as well as reading materials in waiting room
- Post a rainbow sticker/pink triangle at the front desk
- Welcoming staff: training videos (AAMC)
- Encourage longitudinal relationships
- Advocate and anticipate issues
- Be careful with the use of pronouns

Remember

You can make a tremendous difference to your LGBTQ patients by having a welcoming/inclusive practice during this vulnerable and joyous time of their starting their families!