



Pregnancy-Related Risk Factors among Haitian Women in Florida, 2000-2003

Women of Haitian origin experience less favorable pregnancy outcomes and higher maternal risk profiles than their non-Hispanic White counterparts do. Florida PRAMS 2000 through 2003 combined datasets were analyzed to assess risk factors and pregnancy outcomes among the growing Haitian population in Florida. The total sample size of 327 Haitian survey respondents represents 24,586 live births born to Haitian women who were Florida residents during this four-year period.

According to the data, 3.0 percent of live births in Florida were to Haitian women. Among live-births to Haitian women in Florida, more than two-thirds (70.0 percent) occurred within families with annual household incomes of \$15,600 or less, 71.7 percent were to women with no college education, and 43.3 percent were not married. Compared to non-Hispanic White women, Haitian women with live births experienced a higher prevalence of:

- Low birth weight (7.9 percent versus 6.3 percent).
- Very low birth weight (2.1 percent versus 1.1 percent).
- Infants requiring neonatal intensive care (32.5 percent versus 11.0 percent).
- Infants postpartum hospital stays of at least three days (67.8 percent versus 38.0 percent).
- Infants not seeing doctor within first week after birth (30.5 percent versus 16.9 percent).
- Not placing their babies on their backs to sleep (67.7 percent versus 38.6 percent).
- Unintended pregnancy (60.8 percent versus 38.2 percent).
- Receiving no prenatal care during the first trimester (40.8 percent versus 17.5 percent).
- Having no knowledge of the role folic acid plays in preventing certain birth defects (47.7 percent versus 15.3 percent).
- Being uninsured before pregnancy (69.0 percent versus 31.6 percent).
- Receiving Medicaid funds either before or during pregnancy (66.7 percent versus 32.5 percent).
- Having difficulties getting Medicaid among Medicaid recipients (47.8 percent versus 21.4 percent).
- Receiving Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) funds (78.8 percent versus 29.6 percent).
- Cervical incompetence resulting in cervix being sewn shut (7.1 percent versus 1.3 percent).
- Being unmarried (43.3 percent versus 27.3 percent).
- Not having baby in the same room with mother in the hospital (37.5 percent versus 16.9 percent).
- Being tested for HIV during pregnancy or delivery (92.6 percent versus 84.7 percent).
- During prenatal care visits, healthcare providers not discussing:
 - Early labor (24.2 percent versus 15.4 percent).
 - Birth defects screening (29.5 percent versus 13.2 percent).
 - Pregnancy-safe medicines (16.9 percent versus 10.3 percent).
- Experiencing stressful events during the 12-month, pre-birth period:
 - Having a lot of bills they could not pay (49.2 percent versus 25.9 percent).
 - Becoming homeless (7.3 percent versus 1.8 percent).
 - Having a husband or partner say he did not want the pregnancy (19.4 percent versus 8.2 percent).
 - Becoming separated or divorced (16.7 percent versus 9.4 percent).
 - Maternal unemployment (30.2 percent versus 10.9).
 - Paternal unemployment (23.4 percent versus 13.9 percent).

Haitian women experienced a higher prevalence of breastfeeding (82.2 percent) than their non-Hispanic counterparts (75.5 percent). However, this analysis shows that Haitian women are more likely to experience adverse birth outcomes and receive inadequate prenatal care during pregnancy. Further, Haitian women are more likely to experience certain stressful events during pregnancy. The data also underscore the high prevalence of the low socio-economic status among Haitian women in Florida. These findings may assist healthcare providers and program planners in improving pregnancy-related outcomes among Haitian women in Florida.

Florida PRAMS is supported by grant number U50/CCU407145 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

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