Purpose:
Although global maternal mortality rates have declined by 44 percent in the three decades, maternal mortality rates remain excessively high within the United States [1 2]. Black mothers are three to four times more likely to die in childbirth compared to white mothers, regardless of socioeconomic factors such as education and income [3]. Black women have two to three times the risk for preterm and low birth weight infant outcomes [4,5]. These health disparities for childbearing black women have persisted despite overall improvements in pregnancy-related outcomes. While racism, poverty, barriers to health care access, and lifestyle choices are commonly identified stressors [5,6], these alone are inadequate to explain the problem. Missing are the voices of black women about stressors experienced during their pregnancies. The purpose of the completed study was to identify the psychosocial challenges experienced by black mothers using hermeneutic phenomenology.

Methods:
A phenomenological design with hermeneutic interpretation was used. The south-central region of the United States was selected based on high maternal mortality [9] and infant mortality [10] rates within the black community. The research team and the local community coalition identify potential issues regarding maternal mortality in the region. Institutional Review Board approval was obtained before initiating recruitment. A community coalition assisted in recruitment. English speaking black women currently pregnant or those who gave birth within the past 24 months were eligible to participate. The semi-structured interviews were audio-recorded and professionally transcribed. The
research team analyzed the data independently before conducting a team review of each interview.

**Results:**
A total of seven individuals voiced concerns with multiple themes emerging related to caution in developing trusting relationships and awareness of health care bias. Most striking was a general concern for the future of their children also arose with these mothers, but one particularly compelling fear for raising a black son emerged in all of the interviews.

**Conclusion:**
These data call for additional study to validate the findings with a national sample. Given the decades long disparity despite focused research, a viable alternative in altering perinatal care with evidence-based strategies to address the concerns of black women has the potential to significantly improve pregnancy related outcomes.

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**Title:**
Insights Into Unspoken Fears of Pregnant Black Women

**Keywords:**
black women, maternal mortality and phenomenology

**Abstract Summary:**
Health disparities in childbearing black women in the United States continue despite overall improvements in pregnancy-related outcomes globally. This study accounts the lived experiences of black woman during pregnancy including a prominent fear for raising a black son.

**References:**


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