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Providing Resources to Strengthen Fatherhood: Interviews With Fathers Having Been in Gangs or Incarcerated

Baomi Phung, BSN, PHN

Nursing, St. Catherine University, St. Paul, MN, USA

Kathleen M. Bell, EdD, RN, PHN

Nursing, St. Catherine University, Saint Paul, MN, USA

Purpose:

The purpose of this presentation is to discuss research findings of a qualitative study, *Understanding the Issues that Young Men Face in Becoming New Fathers*. The research examines the experiences of 11 multicultural men from the Midwest of the United States, who were becoming fathers or had young children and experiences with gang activity and/or past incarceration. "For many young men, fatherhood acts as a significant turning point, facilitating a shift away from gang involvement, crime and drug sales" (Moloney, et. al., 2009, p. 306). Although incarceration rates of men are high in the United States, the issues of gang involvement and male incarceration are a global challenge. The intention of this research study is to understand the needs of the men in order to develop resources to enhance their role as a father and to strengthen families and communities. There is a significant gap in the understanding of fatherhood and in this subset of young fathers particularly. The requirements of navigating fatherhood are complex and those who have been in gangs or incarcerated have additional considerations and little training or role models.

Methods:

IRB approval and consent from interviewees obtained. Eleven men were asked 24 conversation-style questions regarding upbringing, relationships with their fathers and male mentors, fatherhood, and current living situations during one-on-one interviews. Interviews lasted approximately 45 minutes and were recorded with additional written notes taken. The recordings were transcribed and findings categorized into themes by the researcher and research assistant and validated by written notes.

Results:

Multiple themes came forth through the interview process. Interviewees discussed challenges in their lives and types of resources that may assist through the process of raising children. A few of the men were the main caregivers of their children and were caregivers for other family members' or their partner's children while making efforts to positively change past family patterns. Most interviewees state that they would benefit from skill building in conflict resolution with the women in their lives and the need for help navigating the legal system in regards to custody rights. Navigating schools systems, finding mentors and support, obtaining employment and housing were additional challenges for the interviewees.

Conclusion:

The collaboration of the researcher, three community partners and a student nurse research assistant made this research study possible. All the contributing partners recognize that interventions and support need to be accessible through an

interdisciplinary approach. Various nursing positions are at the forefront of providing touchpoints with this population, including emergency room and trauma nurses, obstetric and labor and delivery nurses, and community and public health nurses. The role of the registered nurse presents a knowledge base and an ethical duty that enhances the opportunity to communicate with the men who are looking to do the right thing with their children. Included in the presentation will be a discussion of reframing perspectives on the population in order to strengthen communities, healthcare, and lifelong outcomes for the men and the children in their lives.

Title:

Providing Resources to Strengthen Fatherhood: Interviews With Fathers Having Been in Gangs or Incarcerated

Keywords:

Ethics, Fatherhood and Gang Activity and Health Issues

Abstract Summary:

This presentation discusses research findings of a qualitative study, *Understanding the Issues that Young Men Face in Becoming New Fathers*. The research examines the experiences of 11 multicultural men from the United States, who were becoming fathers or had young children and experiences with gang activity and/or past incarceration.

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First Secondary Presenting Author

Corresponding Secondary Presenting Author

Baomi Phung, BSN, PHN
 St. Catherine University
 Nursing
 Student Research Assistant
 St. Paul, Minnesota
 USA

Author Summary: Ms Phung is a recent baccalaureate nursing graduate from St. Catherine University and was the student research assistant for this project. She has past involvement with establishing the official chartering of St. Catherine's Nurses of Color student organization. Now, she is working as a RN at the University of Minnesota's Masonic Children's Hospital on the Hematology/Oncology Medical Surgical Unit. Her future interest involves furthering her education in research as a public health nurse.

Second Primary Presenting Author

Primary Presenting Author

Kathleen M. Bell, EdD, RN, PHN
 St. Catherine University
 Nursing
 Associate Professor
 Saint Paul, Minnesota
 USA

Author Summary: This presenter has been in nursing for the last 43 years. Experiences include medical/surgical nursing, ICU, float, and hospice homecare before becoming a nurse educator. She has served in roles of Director of Nursing and Dean of Healthcare Programs. As a life-long learner, she completed her EdD in 2015. Following her completion of her doctoral degree, she has returned to teaching BSN and MS nursing students.