



# Defining unintended pregnancy as a risk factor for physical violence by an intimate partner during pregnancy: An analysis of the 2007 Los Angeles Mommy and Baby Survey

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## Background

- 4-8% of women experience violence during pregnancy (1)
- Violence during pregnancy has been significantly associated with poor health outcomes including:
  - preterm labor, vaginal bleeding, hospitalization prior to delivery, low birth weight infants, and sexually transmitted diseases (2)
- Women with unintended pregnancies had two to four times the risk of experiencing violence during pregnancy than with planned pregnancies (1)
- Examination into the definition of pregnancy intendedness is often limited to mother and intention of father and both parents has not been fully explored

## Research Question

Does unintended pregnancy as defined by mother, father, or both, lead to a greater risk of physical abuse during pregnancy in LA County?

## Methods

The LAMB (Los Angeles Mommy and Baby) Project asks mothers who recently delivered a baby about events that happened before, during, and after their pregnancy.

### Target Population:

- Data was collected on women who recently gave birth in LA County and were selected through a stratified random sample of the state birth registry in 2007

### Procedures:

LAMB Project followed CDC PRAMS procedures as described in Figure 1. Surveys were mailed to participants with telephone follow-up. The survey was administered in English, Spanish, and Chinese with translators available for other languages. To enhance the response rate, all respondents were given a \$20 gift certificate.

### Study Variables:

#### Unintended Pregnancy:

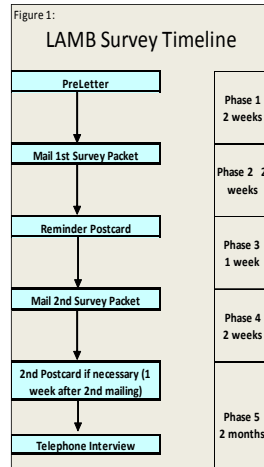
- Defined in 3 ways: mother answering yes to 1) mother 2) husband/partner and 3) both mother and husband/partner wanted pregnancy later or not at any time in the future

#### Physical Abuse:

- Defined as mother answering yes to if the baby's father hit or slapped the mother during the last pregnancy

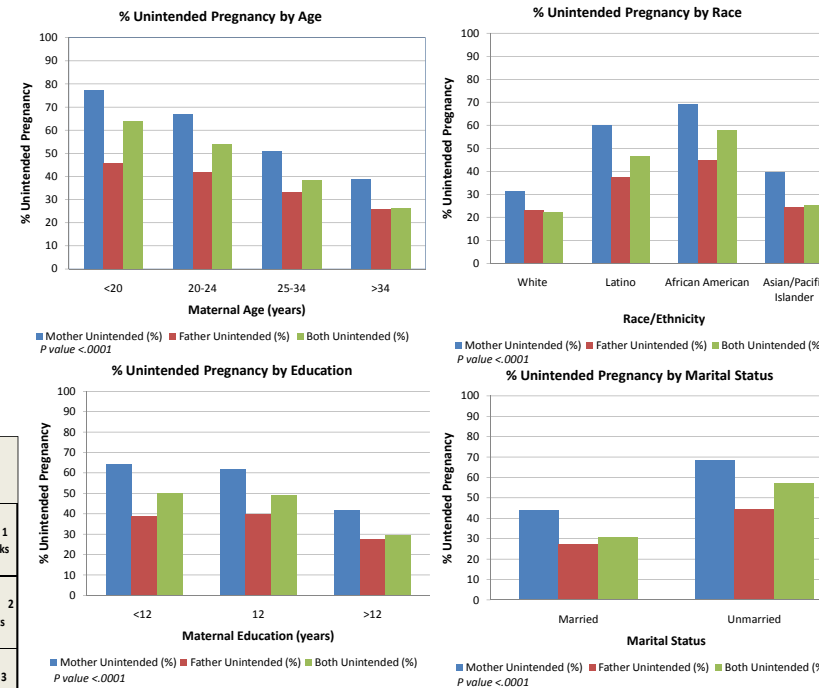
#### Analyses:

- Bivariate analyses were conducted using the Rao-Scott Chi-Square Statistic and multivariate analyses were conducted using multiple logistic analysis on SAS 9.2. Analyses used both sampling and non-response weights to estimate population prevalence.



## Results

6,252 surveys were completed in 2007. 55.3% of respondents indicated their last birth was an unintended pregnancy. 34.8% said the pregnancy was unintended for the father, and 41.4% of respondents indicated that the pregnancy was unintended for both the mother and father.



Unintended pregnancies as defined by mother, father, and both were more prevalent in younger, African American, less educated, and unmarried women.

Associations of Physical Violence During Pregnancy	Experienced Physical Abuse During Pregnancy, Unadjusted OR (95% CI)	Experienced Physical Abuse During Pregnancy, Adjusted OR (95% CI)
Unintended Pregnancy		
Mother Unintended	1.949 (1.327-2.861)	1.368 (0.91-2.057)
Father Unintended	2.417 (1.654-3.531)	1.825 (1.232-2.704)
Both Unintended	3.047 (1.889-4.914)	2.037 (1.235-3.36)

- Mothers are at increased risk (AOR 1.825) for physical abuse during pregnancy if they perceive the father did not intend the pregnancy
- The risk of physical abuse is the highest (AOR 2.037) when both the father and mother indicate an unintended pregnancy
- The mother's intendedness alone was not a significant risk factor for physical abuse during pregnancy when adjusted for confounding variables
- Unmarried women were also found to be at significant risk for physical abuse during pregnancy when both partners indicated an unintended pregnancy than married women (AOR 2.785; 95% CI 1.6-5.0)

## Limitations

- This study is representative of women who delivered live births in Los Angeles County and may not accurately represent other populations.
- This study also is based off of the mother's perception of the father's intendedness of the pregnancy as it does not directly interview the fathers.

## Implications

- Providers should expand assessment of unintended pregnancy to consider fathers' intendedness
- The significant association between fathers' unintended pregnancy and intimate partner physical violence during pregnancy can help providers screen and identify women at higher risk for physical violence during pregnancy
- Knowledge of marital status can also help providers identify women at increased risk for intimate partner physical violence during pregnancy

## References

1. Gazmararian JA, Petersen R, Spitz AM, Goodwin MM, Saltzman LE, Marks JS. Violence and Reproductive Health: Current Knowledge and Future Research Directions. *Matern Child Health J.* 2000; 4:79-84.
2. Silverman JG, Decker MR, Reed E, Raj A. Intimate partner violence victimization prior to and during pregnancy among women residing in 26 U.S. states: Associations with maternal and neonatal health. *Am J Obstet Gynecol.* 2005; 195:140-8.