How Women with a History of Child Sexual Assault Experience Pregnancy and Childbirth: A Qualitative Analysis

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Why is the research being conducted?

Under the supervision of Professor Murray Dyck, Casie Walker is conducting this research in partial fulfilment of the Master of Clinical Psychology program within the School of Applied Psychology. The research project has been approved by the Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee under protocol number PSY/43/14/HREC.

This research is focussed on gathering detailed descriptions of how women with and without a prior history of child sexual assault experience pregnancy, childbirth and the early postpartum period.

What will you be asked to do and how do you consent to participate?

To participate in this research you will be required to read through this information sheet and advise the student researcher that you would like to arrange an interview at a mutually suitable time; booking and attending this interview would be deemed your action of informed consent. The semi-structured interview will take around two hours and will most likely be carried out at the Griffith University, Gold Coast, Psychology Clinic. If this venue is not suitable (e.g. due to distance from home or other travel difficulties) another venue will be arranged that is suitable for both you and the researcher; alternatively phone or skype facilities may be utilized. The interview will focus specifically on your experience of pregnancy, childbirth and the early postpartum period with questions on things like your health, moods, thoughts, reactions, relationships, supports, any stressors you experienced and how you adapted to motherhood. The entire interview will be video or audio recorded so that it can be transcribed by either the student researcher or a professional transcriber; once this has occurred the recording will be destroyed and the transcription of the interview will be stored securely by the student researcher. The student researcher will likely employ a professional transcription service, which specializes in academic transcription to transcribe a number of the interviews; no identifying or personal information (e.g. full names or contact details) will be provided to the transcriber other than that detailed in the recording maximizing participant confidentiality. The recording and transcription
will only be accessed by the research team, including transcribers, who are all bound by confidentiality and the data will not be used for any other purpose. It is a requirement of participation in the research that the interview be recorded.

**How are participants selected and screened?**

To participate in this research you will be required to self-select and initiate contact. All women involved in this study are required to be over 18 and have had the experience of one pregnancy and live childbirth and have identified that they are in a position to reflect upon and openly discuss this time in their life. If you are part of the target sample you have self-selected based on your prior experience of child sexual assault that fits the inclusion criteria specified, that is that your experience/s of sexual violence occurred only before the age of 16 and at least one experience meets the QLD Criminal Code definition of rape (“sexual intercourse without consent; it involves penetration of a person’s vulva, vagina or anus to any extent with an object or body part as well as oral penetration of a person by a penis without consent”). If you are part of the comparison sample you have self-selected for inclusion in the study based on your willingness to participate in the interview process; you have then been identified by the researcher, from a pool of women who have expressed interest in participation, for inclusion based on you having similar demographic characteristics to women in the target sample.

**What are the expected benefits of the research?**

It is hoped that the information gathered as part of this research will add to the growing body of research that focuses on the intersection of the women's health issues of sexual violence and pregnancy. Women who participate may experience benefits directly by having an opportunity to openly discuss an emotional and important time in their lives. Further, it is hoped that the results of this research benefit the wider groups of women in general and specifically women with a history of sexual violence by promoting further research into experiences during and after pregnancy and identifying areas where support and intervention may be warranted.

**What are the potential risks of the research?**

As a participant involved in this research you will be required to discuss emotive, private and sensitive experiences from your past. As a result there is a risk of discomfort and distress to you during and after the interview process. It should be noted that all women involved in the study will be exposed to the same interview questions, which means there are no direct questions related to the sexual violence experiences of the target sample; if you are part of the target sample following your self-identification as meeting inclusion criteria there is no information gathering directly related to this experience. If you feel it relevant to discuss this experience within the context of the interview then you are more than welcome to. The interviews are being carried out by a student researcher who has experience in sexual assault and generalist counseling, which will ensure appropriate action is taken if you become uncomfortable or distressed at any point. If you experience distress, you will have the option of taking a break and will be asked to consent to continue at a later time. Further debriefing will be available from the student researcher at the termination of the interview if required.
If you feel in any way distressed following your participation in this research, you can contact:

Griffith University Psychology Clinic  (07) 5552 8556
The National Domestic and Family Violence Line  1800 Respect
Lifeline Telephone Counselling  13-11-14

How will your confidentiality be ensured?

At the time of initial contact you will have been asked to provide a first name and preferred contact method and detail (e.g. email), which will be kept only up until data collection is complete to allow for ongoing contact. Your contact details will not be stored in connection with interview data and your confidentiality will be ensured throughout the process of this research. If your initial contact with the researcher was assisted by a third party (e.g. support person) the details of your participation will not be communicated back to them by the researcher.

At the interview you will be asked to provide a code (e.g. first three letters of your mother’s maiden name) that will be attached to your interview data; the researcher will not keep a record of which code is assigned to which participant to ensure your confidentiality. This code will be required if at a later stage you decide to withdraw participation from the study. As data will be collected in interview format, de-identification will occur once the interview is transcribed into writing. The interview will be transcribed either by the student researcher or by a professional transcriber. Once transcribed, the recording of the interview will be destroyed and all identifying information will be removed from the transcription and the research team will not be able to identify the data of individual participants. Research results will be reported as a group with no individuals being identifiable.

Privacy

The conduct of this research involves the collection, access and/or use of your identified personal information. The information collected is confidential and will not be disclosed to third parties without your consent, except to meet government, legal or other regulatory authority requirements. A de-identified copy of this data may be used for other research purposes. However, your anonymity will at all times be safeguarded. For further information consult the University’s Privacy Plan at http://www.griffith.edu.au/about-griffith/plans-publications/griffith-university-privacy-plan or telephone (07) 3735 4375

Is participation voluntary?

Your participation in this research is voluntary. You are free to withdraw from inclusion in the study at any time. If you decide to withdraw at a time after your interview data has been transcribed and de-identified you will be required to provide the code that you were assigned at the interview; without this your individual data will not be identifiable by the researcher.
Questions / Concerns / Feedback?

If you have any questions, would like further information or are interested in feedback on the overall research findings please contact the student or principal researcher using the details at the top of this information sheet.

Worried about the ethical conduct of this research?

Griffith University conducts research in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research. If you have any concerns or complaints about the ethical conduct of the research project you can contact the Manager, Research Ethics, Office for Research, Bray Centre, Nathan Campus, Griffith University on (07) 3755 5585 or research-ethics@griffith.edu.au.