

# Giving Voice to African American Women in Shaping Health Disparity Inquiry



Pamela McGranahan MSN, RN

Suzanne Gaulocher MPH, MA

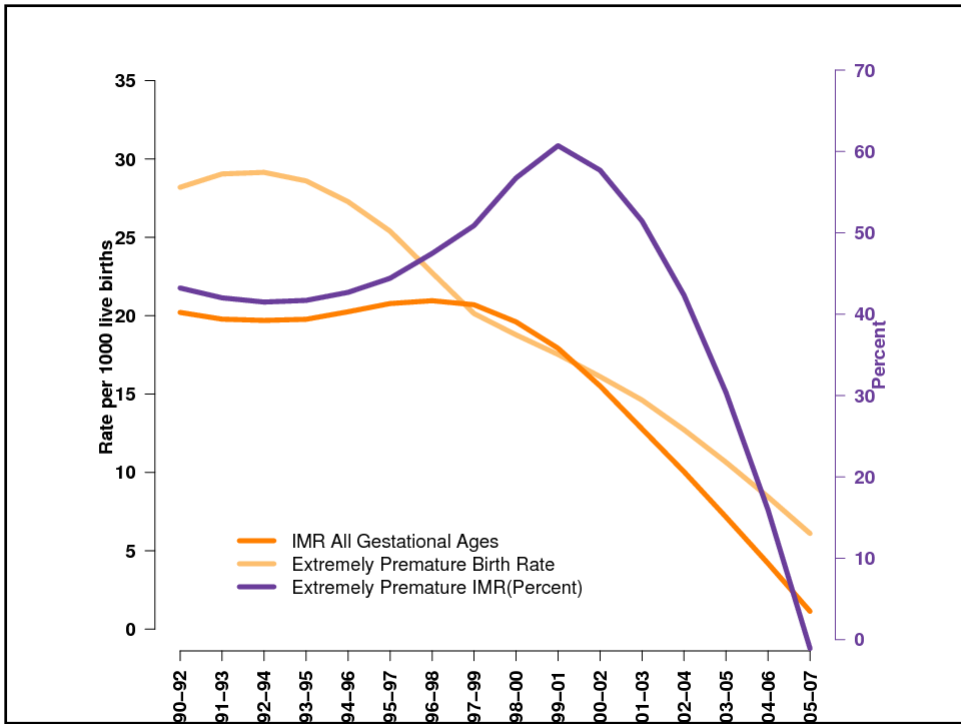
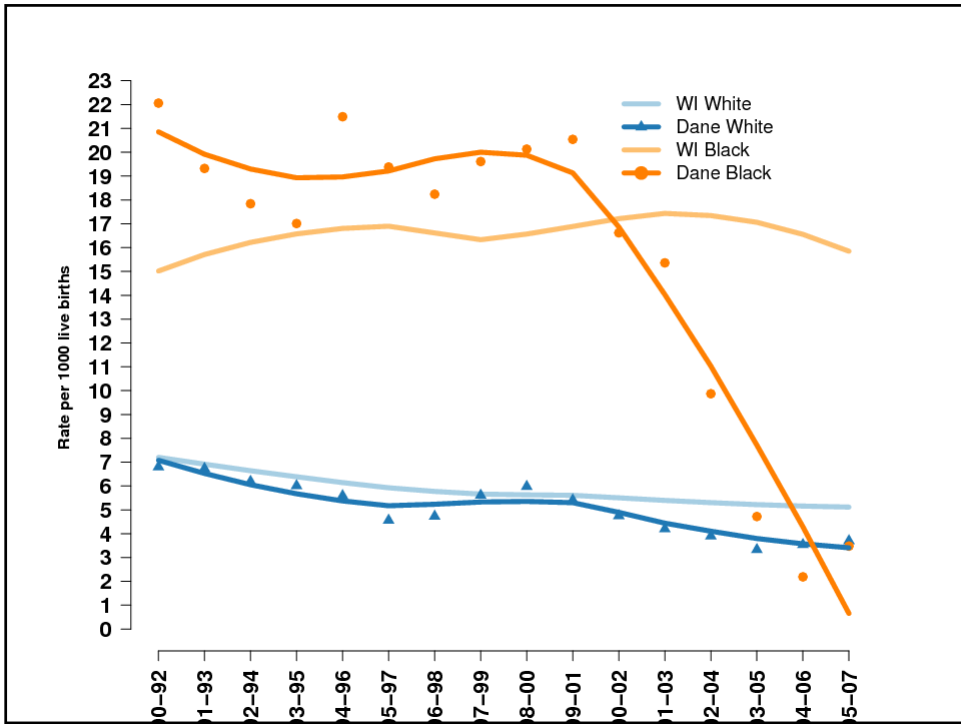
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## Background

- Out of 40 reporting states, WI has historically had the worst black IMR
- WI Infants born to African-American women are 3-4 times more likely to die before their first birthday than infants born to white women
- Around 2002, African American infant mortality declined dramatically and achieved rates comparable with Whites in Madison and Dane County



# Objectives

- Create a forum for community voice
- Generate hypotheses that will shape future research
- Illuminate the experiences and perceptions of African-American women
- Identify community-level factors or variations in healthcare practices that might account for the apparent improvement

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## Focus Groups: Inform MERC Project

- 12 Key Informant Interviews
- 2 Focus Groups:
  - Older women (N = 8)
  - Younger women (N = 7)
- 8 Themes:
  - Family and Social Support
  - Health Care & Access to Information
  - Sex / Relationships
  - Race / Socioeconomic Status
  - Ageism
  - Stress
  - Resilience
  - Fathers



## Analysis

- Focus groups analyzed using NVivo qualitative software program
- Generated 8 Themes
- Pen-3 Model vs. Grounded Theory – Lessons Learned:
  - Using a cultural framework during application of inquiry:
    - Cultural Empowerment
    - Cultural Identity
    - Relationships & Expectations

Kannan S. et.al. Using a Cultural Framework to Assess the Nutrition Influences in Relation to Birth Outcomes. *Public Health Education*, 2008.



## Continued stressors: Room for Improvement

- Need formal supports for fathers
  - Need increased economic support, education and employment
  
  - Further inquiry of the role of poverty
  - Further inquiry of the role of stress
  - Further inquiry into the role of race vs. class
- } Especially over the life course

## Race / Socioeconomic Status

- Younger women acknowledge discrimination due to marital status or age, but don't go to race as their first inclination
  
- Question: Is this a function of the older moms protecting their daughters, or simply a function of normal development ?
  
- Huge potential for more targeted, meaningful inquiry in the future

## Health Care & Access to Information in Dane County

- Preliminary scan: No real difference in practice
- There is ample access to services and a wide variety of services available
- Unique professional relationships: Consumers don't slip through the cracks or experience long wait times
- Innovative evidence-based practice for healthcare and service providers

## Resilience

- There is a pronounced sense of self-worth, personal efficacy, social competence and connectedness
- They expect to be treated well, expect the fathers of their babies to stay involved and supportive, and have a belief that good things lie before them in the future. *(Taught or happy luck? Or a benefit of growing up here?)*
- Women have a belief that good things lie before them in the future

## Fathers

- Women expect fathers of their babies to stay involved and be supportive
- Fathers are involved with their babies even if they are not involved with the mother

## Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report: [www.cdc.gov/mmwr](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr)

Apparent Disappearance of the Black-White  
Infant Mortality Gap – Dane County,  
Wisconsin, 1990-2007 (May 29, 2009/ Vol.  
58/ No. 20)

## Contact Information:

■ Pamela McGranahan RN, MSN

608-243-0425

[pmcgranahan@publichealthmdc.com](mailto:pmcgranahan@publichealthmdc.com)

■ Suzanne Gaulocher MPH, MA

[gaulocher@wisc.edu](mailto:gaulocher@wisc.edu)

608-354-1864