

Identifying Hospital System Factors Influencing Birth Experiences Among Black Women in Michigan

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INTRODUCTION

Black women experience persistent disparities in maternal outcomes and report poorer maternity care experiences than White women.¹ Variation in hospital care and mistrust of healthcare systems may contribute to these disparities, yet factors shaping childbirth experiences remain poorly understood.^{2,3} Understanding Black women's experiences may identify opportunities to improve equitable, patient-centered maternity care. This collaborative qualitative study between the Michigan Health & Hospital Association, Michigan Council for Maternal and Child Health, and Michigan State University sought to understand Black women's birthing experiences across three regions of Michigan to identify hospital system factors that may inform improvements in maternity care.

AIM

- Identify hospital system-level factors influencing labor and delivery experiences among Black women in Michigan.

METHODS

- Design:** Qualitative study using semi-structured interviews and focus groups.
- Participants:** Black women delivering at three Michigan hospitals between 2021–2023 (n=54).
- Data Collection:** Following Michigan State University IRB approval (STUDY00009495) and consent, participants completed a demographic questionnaire before participating in focus groups and semi-structured interviews.
- Data Analysis:** Audio-recorded interviews and focus groups were transcribed verbatim and analyzed using MAXQDA.⁴ Related codes were grouped into themes and subthemes through an iterative thematic analysis.

CONTACT INFORMATION

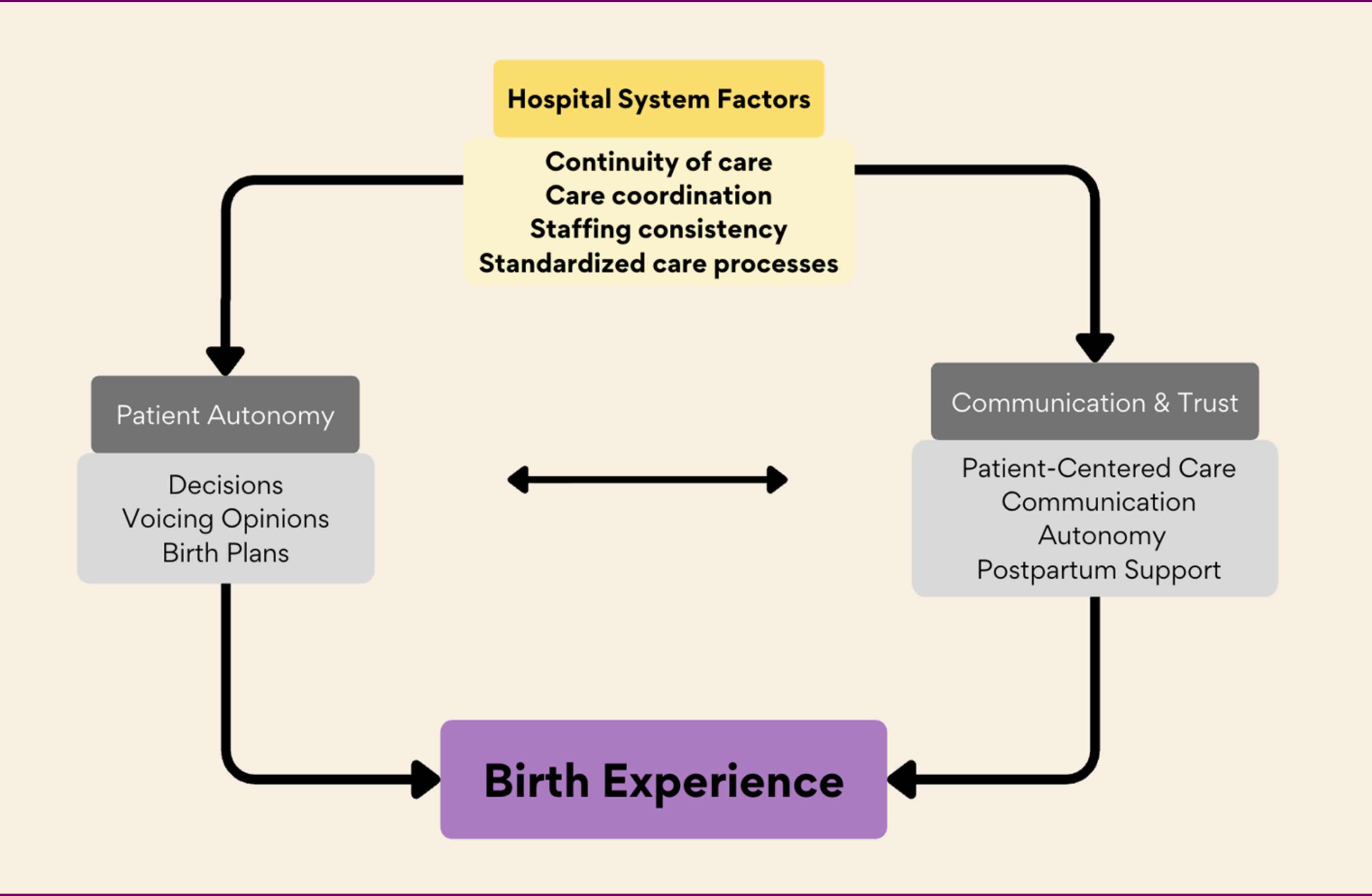
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REFERENCES



RESULTS

Figure 1. Conceptual framework illustrating three interconnected domains shaping hospital birth experiences among Black women in Michigan.



CONCLUSIONS

- Continuity of Care:** Prioritize continuity when feasible to strengthen patient trust, comfort, and familiarity.
- Care Coordination:** Strengthen communication and coordination across multidisciplinary care teams to reduce uncertainty and fragmented care.
- Staffing Consistency:** Reduce unnecessary provider transitions to promote more consistent, patient-centered care.
- Standardized Processes:** Develop consistent processes for documenting and honoring patient preferences across providers.
- These system-level factors intersect with patient autonomy and communication & trust, highlighting how organizational structures may shape multiple dimensions of the birth experience.
- Organizational improvements across these domains represent actionable opportunities to advance equitable, patient-centered maternity care.**

CONTINUITY OF CARE

Key Findings

- Participants valued having a familiar provider throughout pregnancy and delivery.
- Lack of provider continuity reduced comfort and trust.
- Familiarity with providers improved perceived quality of care.

Quote

"Maintaining one physician is good because he or she will be closely monitoring what you're going through and all the experiences. So it will be so easy for them to... advise you on a particular matter." (ID 47)

CARE COORDINATION

Key Findings

- Frequent provider transitions fragmented care.
- Participants described uncertainty when multiple providers became involved.
- Better coordination increased confidence in the care team.

Quote

"By the time it was ready for labor... I didn't even see them. I wanted to have a connection with somebody... I have so many different nurses and people coming in and out of my room trying to help me... but I still didn't get to have a connection." (ID 10)

STAFFING CONSISTENCY

Key Findings

- Staff turnover disrupted relationships during labor.
- Participants experienced inconsistent care depending on who was providing treatment.
- Consistent staffing improved comfort and communication.

Quote

"They made me feel comfortable when they was talking to me... But it's just the consistency." (Focus Group)

STANDARDIZED PROCESSES

Key Findings

- Birth preferences not consistently implemented.
- Participants described variability in care across providers.
- Consistent approaches to honoring patient preferences improved experiences.

Quote

"It was the only option, but they were very informative... they all walked me through everything that was going to happen... during and after... the surgery and the recovery process." (ID 93)

LIMITATIONS

- Findings reflect experiences from participants at three Michigan hospitals.
- Participant experiences may not be representative of all birthing populations.
- Findings may not be generalizable to other geographic regions or healthcare systems.

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