

Maternal-Fetal Bonding for African American Mothers

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Abstract : This paper focuses on the influence of maternal-fetal bonding by examining attachment theory, psycho-social-cultural influences/adaptations, and maternal well-being. A systematic review methodology was used to synthesize research results to summarize current evidence that can contribute to evidence-based practices. It explores the relationship between attachment styles, prenatal attachment, and perceptions of maternal-infant bonding/attachment six weeks postpartum. It also examines the protective factors of maternal-fetal attachment development. The research explores Bowlby's attachment theory and its relevance to maternal-fetal bonding with a Black Feminist Theory lens. Additionally, it discusses the impact of perceived stress, social support, and ecological models on maternal-fetal attachment. The relationship between maternal well-being, maternal-fetal attachment, and early postpartum bonding is reviewed. Moreover, the paper specifically addresses black mothers and maternal-fetal bonding, exploring the intersectionality of race, ethnicity, class, geographic location, cultural identities, and immigration status. It considers the role of familial and partner support, as well as the relationship between maternal attachment style and maternal-fetal bonding, within the framework of attachment theory and black feminist theory. Therefore, it is imperative to center Black women's voices in research, policy, and healthcare practices. Black women are experts in their own experiences and advocate for their autonomy in decision-making regarding maternal-fetal health. By amplifying their voices, we can ensure that interventions are grounded in their lived experiences.

Keywords : maternal-fetal bonding, infant well-being, maternal-infant attachment, black mothers

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