

Maternity study seeks views of disabled and abused women

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Recent research suggests that approximately 10% of women giving birth in the UK each year have some degree of disability, and nearly half of these women will experience domestic abuse during their pregnancy.

Now a new study is looking to speak to [women](#) to find out about their experiences of using [maternity](#) services when they have a disability and have experienced [domestic abuse](#). An experienced team of researchers from the Universities of Dundee, Manchester, Edinburgh, and Queen's University Belfast, as well as NHS Fife, are carrying out the study, which is funded by the charity Wellbeing of Women.

Dr Caroline Bradbury-Jones, from The University of Manchester, who is leading the study, said: "We know that disabled people in general have poorer access to needed healthcare services and women experiencing domestic abuse are more likely to receive inadequate [maternity care](#)."

Her colleague, Dr Jenna Breckenridge, of the University of Dundee added: "Very little is known about women's access to maternity care when both disability and domestic abuse co-exist. Good maternity care is essential to detecting and responding to pregnancy complications and so it is important that women have equal access to care."

The study aims to find out how domestic abuse might affect access to maternity healthcare for disabled women. Researchers will speak to women about their experiences of using maternity services and listen to their suggestions for improvement.

The later phases of the study will involve group interviews with women and maternity care professionals to develop operational strategies for improving services and informing health professionals' education.

The research team is currently recruiting women to take part in individual interviews. They would like to speak to women who:

- have some form of disability or health condition, including women with mobility, visual, hearing or communication impairments, mental health issues or learning disabilities.
- have experienced physical, emotional, sexual or financial abuse from an intimate partner
- and have recently been pregnant, including women who have had a miscarriage, termination or stillbirth.

Interviews will be one-to-one and will last approximately one hour. The interviewer will ask about experiences of using maternity or reproductive services to find out what helped the patient, or what made it more difficult for them to get the care they needed. All information gathered will be treated in absolute confidence.

More information: If you would like to take part or think you could help find women to take part, please contact Dr Jenna Breckenridge at the University of Dundee by email at j.breckenridge@dundee.ac.uk or by calling 01382 388658 or 07546347519. You can also contact Dr Caroline Bradbury-Jones at The University of Manchester at caroline.bradbury-jones@manchester.ac.uk.

Provided by University of Manchester

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