

Pregnancy and Parenting in Medical School

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BACKGROUND

- Medical education overlaps with childbearing years
- ~10% of graduating students have dependents
- Literature on med student experience with pregnancy / parenting is scant

METHODS

1. Semi-structured interviews
2. Coding using Dedoose platform
3. Thematic analysis

RESULTS

Top line themes include:

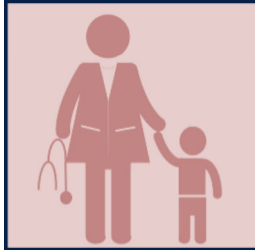
- Health / wellbeing
- Perceptions of others
- Policy & program considerations
- Career plans

DISCUSSION

Common themes emerged which lend themselves to recommendations for medical school administrators. Interviews also revealed the heterogeneity of experience among pregnant and parenting students.

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Medical students who are pregnant or parenting want more:

- Flexibility

"The administration didn't really have a way to address [parental leave] short of, 'you'll have to graduate later.'"

"I think if I had ... the ability to take off time when I needed it ... then my career wouldn't have been a deciding factor in whether I should keep my pregnancy."

- Transparency

"I wish both medical schools and residencies were more transparent about what their pregnancy accommodations are. It does feel unjust that in order to get that information, women have to disclose that this is part of their potential plan ... at the expense of potential unconscious bias and affect on their careers."

"I felt like it was a secret option. It was, like, I was being done this enormous favor and please don't tell anyone that we're doing this for you."

- Autonomy

"It was one of those moments where ... I felt forced into telling a random person about my pregnancy, and I generally wasn't super comfortable doing that."

UCSF

University of California
San Francisco

A Range of Experiences: From "Space Alien" to "Superhero"

"I felt like a space alien...I think that other students were like, 'What? How? That's such a crazy thing to do.' I felt like it was just a very ... rare choice ... I felt like a curiosity."



"There's so much both physical but emotional labor that goes into parenting and child-rearing, and to be able to do that and also balance being a student or working I think is so admirable, and I feel proud to be a part of that contingent of people that I see as society's secret superheroes."

