

“It’s not just that I’m having a baby for someone I don’t even know, it’s that they’re gay”:

*Experiences of Gestational Surrogacy for Gay Men
in Canada*

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The Study

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How do gay intended fathers and gestational surrogates in Canada experience the practice of gestational surrogacy?

1. Motivations to pursue surrogacy
2. Relationships between surrogates and gay fathers:
 - a. *Before Pregnancy*
 - b. *During Pregnancy*
 - c. *Post-Birth*
3. **Individual and institutional supports and barriers**

1. Accessibility of information on surrogacy

- How to discern information readily available online
- Overwhelmed by horror stories and paranoia
- No official resource, ‘how-to guide’ or formal information
- Heteronormative information on parenting & fertility

2. Practices and Policies of Clinics and Hospitals

- Surrogates wanted more transparency about reproductive risks, medical issues & side effects, childbirth contingency plans
- Unwelcoming or unfamiliar with surrogate pregnancies
- Lack of LGBTQ inclusivity, language, terminology, sperm donation practices

3. Public attitudes towards Surrogacy

- Stigma surrounding surrogacy (e.g., monetary payment, baby farming)
- Abuse of women and exploitation
- Added discrimination/bias when carrying for gay men
- There is a public perception of shame
- Discriminatory attitudes towards gay fathers
- Unconscious bias (e.g., giving the wife a break/daddy's babysitting)

4. Federal Regulations and Resources

- Participants advocated for legislative change to surrogacy laws
- The need for more clarity and political transparency
- Governmental forms, administrative (office) personnel
- Drop-in parenting groups and resources (formula feeding, pre-natal)

Discussion

- Lack of reliable and accurate information
- Ambiguous guidelines and regulations
- Legality of online surrogacy consulting services
- Negative public attitudes

- Limited resources that reflect same-sex families
- Irrelevant administrative documentation
- Discriminatory & exclusionary practices and policies
- Confronted with anti-gay epithets while out with their children
- Delays with health insurance documents and birth certificates

Moving Forward

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- Individual and institutional strategies to confront biases in healthcare practices and social services
 - Policies that respect IP decision-making and surrogate pregnancies
 - Clear informed consent
 - Promote substantial administrative changes to mirror federal legislation
1. Promote inclusive language
 2. Relevant pamphlets and posters and safe spaces
 3. Equitable practices and policies to include gay father families
 4. Resist institutional level sexual stigma and heteronormativity



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Additional Slides for Questions

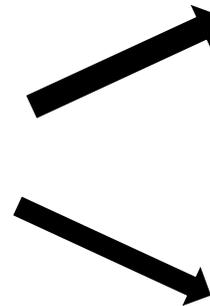
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Sample Characteristics

21 Total Eligible Participants

- **1 Separated Father**
- **2 Partner Dyads (4 participants)**
- **1 Gestational Surrogate**
- **5 Matched Surrogate Triads (15 participants)**



**5 Partner Dyads
(10 participants)**

**5 Gestational
Surrogates**

17 Participants met through surrogacy consulting services

Demographic		Gay Fathers (n=15)	Surrogates (n=6)
<u>Age</u>		Avg: 39 years old (29-50 years)	Avg: 34 years old (22-45 years)
<u>Individual Income (CDN)</u>			
	<40,000		50% (n=3)
	40,000-80,000	47% (n=7)	17% (n=1)
	81,000-120,000	13% (n=2)	-----
	121,000-160,000	13% (n=2)	-----
	161,000-200,000	13% (n=2)	-----
	200,000+	13% (n=2)	-----
		Median: 81,000-120,000	Median: <40,000
<u>Race</u>	<i>White</i>	87% (n=13)	83% (n=5)
	<i>Aboriginal</i>	-----	17% (n=1)
	<i>Asian</i>	13% (n=2)	-----
<u>Education</u>	<i>High School</i>	13% (n=2)	-----
	<i>College</i>	13% (n=2)	50% (n=3)
	<i>University</i>	33% (n=5)	33% (n=2)
	<i>Post-Grad</i>	40% (n=6)	-----
<u>Region</u>	<i>Rural</i>	-----	17% (n=1)
	<i>Urban</i>	73% (n=11)	33% (n=2)
	<i>Suburban</i>	27% (n=4)	33% (n=2)
<u>Number of Children</u>		Avg: 1.4 children (1-2; surrogate offspring)	Avg: 2.7 Children (1-5; own children)
<u>Age of Children</u>		Avg: 2.3 years old (1 month-5 yrs)	

Fertility Clinics	Hospitals
<p data-bbox="262 402 968 492" style="text-align: center;"><u>Recommendations on care provision for surrogates</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="199 548 982 586">•Clear/easy to understand informed consent: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="199 597 474 634">a. Procedures <li data-bbox="199 646 485 683">b. Medications <li data-bbox="199 695 537 732">c. Perinatal Risks <li data-bbox="199 743 768 781">d. Childbirth contingency plans <li data-bbox="199 792 575 829">e. Risks to offspring <li data-bbox="199 883 972 972">•Counselling and therapeutic support during the process <li data-bbox="199 1026 1024 1208">•Information on expectations and guidelines of: medical process, reproductive testing, potential mental health issues, and potential birth and delivery complications 	<p data-bbox="1136 402 1841 492" style="text-align: center;"><u>Recommendations on care provision for surrogates</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="1050 548 1787 638">•Hospital staff who are understanding and supportive of surrogacy pregnancies <li data-bbox="1050 691 1906 826">•Managing reproductive questions in a respectful way that recognizes surrogate's detached role post-birth <li data-bbox="1050 883 1913 972">•Provide intended parents' last name to newborn, rather than the surrogate's name <li data-bbox="1050 1026 1881 1115">•Training on how to care for the surrogate post-birth

Fertility Clinics	Hospitals
<p data-bbox="163 331 1045 428"><u>Recommendations on care provision for gay men</u></p> <ul data-bbox="163 493 1045 1344" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="163 493 1045 591">•Visible LGBT positive environment (e.g., posters, forms, physical space) <li data-bbox="163 656 1045 808">•Pamphlets, resources and services specifically aimed to assist gay intended parents through surrogacy <li data-bbox="163 873 1045 971">•Parenting resources for gay fathers post-birth <li data-bbox="163 1036 1045 1182">•Inclusive language and active representation of same-sex parents and families <li data-bbox="163 1247 1045 1344">•Consideration of inclusivity of sperm donation 	<p data-bbox="1071 331 1944 370"><u>Recommendations on care provision for gay men</u></p> <ul data-bbox="1071 428 1944 1442" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="1071 428 1944 526">•Policies that respect intended parents' reproductive decision-making <li data-bbox="1071 591 1944 737">•Beds and/or rooms for the intended parents to stay in the hospital with the newborn <li data-bbox="1071 802 1944 948">•Staff who are knowledgeable about forms and familiar with post-birth documents that are non-inclusive and confusing <li data-bbox="1071 1013 1944 1159">•Social workers and allied health professionals who can support gay fathers on their transition to parenthood <li data-bbox="1071 1224 1944 1321">•Refer to the intended parents as the parents <li data-bbox="1071 1386 1944 1442">•Formula feeding consultations