

“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

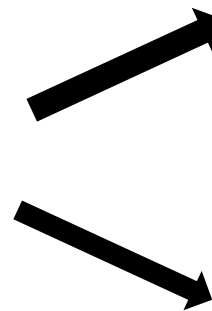
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Sample Characteristics

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>	White	87% (n=13)	83% (n=5)
	Aboriginal	-----	17% (n=1)
	Asian	13% (n=2)	-----
<u>Education</u>	High School	13% (n=2)	-----
	College	13% (n=2)	50% (n=3)
	University	33% (n=5)	33% (n=2)
	Post-Grad	40% (n=6)	-----
<u>Region</u>	Rural	-----	17% (n=1)
	Urban	73% (n=11)	33% (n=2)
	Suburban	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="262 402 968 488"><u>Recommendations on care provision for surrogates</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="197 545 982 586">•Clear/easy to understand informed consent: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="197 594 474 634">a. Procedures <li data-bbox="197 643 485 683">b. Medications <li data-bbox="197 691 537 732">c. Perinatal Risks <li data-bbox="197 740 768 781">d. Childbirth contingency plans <li data-bbox="197 789 575 829">e. Risks to offspring <li data-bbox="197 878 972 967">•Counselling and therapeutic support during the process <li data-bbox="197 1024 1024 1203">•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 488"><u>Recommendations on care provision for surrogates</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="1045 545 1787 634">•Hospital staff who are understanding and supportive of surrogacy pregnancies <li data-bbox="1045 691 1906 821">•Managing reproductive questions in a respectful way that recognizes surrogate's detached role post-birth <li data-bbox="1045 878 1913 967">•Provide intended parents' last name to newborn, rather than the surrogate's name <li data-bbox="1045 1024 1881 1114">•Training on how to care for the surrogate post-birth

Fertility Clinics	Hospitals
<p data-bbox="155 331 1058 428"><u>Recommendations on care provision for gay men</u></p> <ul data-bbox="155 493 995 1338" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="155 493 995 591">•Visible LGBT positive environment (e.g., posters, forms, physical space) <li data-bbox="155 656 995 802">•Pamphlets, resources and services specifically aimed to assist gay intended parents through surrogacy <li data-bbox="155 867 995 964">•Parenting resources for gay fathers post-birth <li data-bbox="155 1029 995 1175">•Inclusive language and active representation of same-sex parents and families <li data-bbox="155 1240 995 1338">•Consideration of inclusivity of sperm donation 	<p data-bbox="1058 331 1955 363"><u>Recommendations on care provision for gay men</u></p> <ul data-bbox="1058 428 1955 1435" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="1058 428 1955 526">•Policies that respect intended parents' reproductive decision-making <li data-bbox="1058 591 1955 737">•Beds and/or rooms for the intended parents to stay in the hospital with the newborn <li data-bbox="1058 802 1955 948">•Staff who are knowledgeable about forms and familiar with post-birth documents that are non-inclusive and confusing <li data-bbox="1058 1013 1955 1159">•Social workers and allied health professionals who can support gay fathers on their transition to parenthood <li data-bbox="1058 1224 1955 1321">•Refer to the intended parents as the parents <li data-bbox="1058 1386 1955 1435">•Formula feeding consultations