

Aneuploidy Screening in the Antenatal Testing Unit at Boston Medical Center: Assessing the Context of Decision-Making around Non-Invasive Screening Options

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This pilot study aimed to assess the decision-making process of women offered cell-free DNA (cfDNA) screening whose pregnancies were deemed to be at an elevated risk for aneuploidy. The goal was to better understand this process by examining factors related to personal feelings, previous exposure to genetics in healthcare, access to transportation, religion and religiosity, and influence of family, friends, and community. Semi-structured, in-person interviews were conducted with English-speaking women who met the above criteria immediately after their appointment with a genetic counselor where they had been offered cfDNA screening. Interviews were transcribed, coded, and analyzed by the Study PI using grounded theory methodology to identify significant themes. The participants reported that they were most concerned with being prepared for adverse pregnancy outcomes. The study found that neither the influences of the genetic counseling appointment, their religion, or their immediate families would outweigh their personal opinions in decisions surrounding their pregnancies or healthcare decisions in general. This research examined pre-selected personal aspects of the decision-making process in the context of the participants' pregnancies and analyzed how their support systems and the type of information available about their pregnancy influenced that decision-making.