Intersections of ethnicity and social class in provider advice regarding reproductive health

Authors: Downing RA et al

Summary: In this study, ethnically diverse, low-income (n=193) and middle-class women (n=146) were questioned about their pregnancy-related health care experiences. The main aim of the study was to examine whether health care providers are perceived as advising low-income women, particularly women of colour, to limit their childbearing and to what extent they feel they are discouraged by providers from having future children. According to logistic regression analyses, the odds of being advised to limit childbearing were greater for low-income women of colour than for middle-class White women. In a separate statistical analysis, the odds of being discouraged from having children were greater for low-income Latinas than for middle-class White women. The study authors conclude that more research is needed to assess how ethnicity and social class impact women’s experiences with reproductive health care.

Comment: I was shaken by the findings of this study. Given the simple study design and current focus on sexual and maternity health care for Māori, a similar study may be warranted here.

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Independent commentary by Dr Matire Harwood

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