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Perinatal experiences of lesbian non-biological mothers

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This study was conducted to describe the perinatal experiences of motherhood from the perspective of lesbian non-biological mothers using descriptive phenomenological approach. Twenty-four self-identified lesbian non-biological mothers in a committed relationship participated. All of the participants were from urban or suburban areas in the Pacific Northwest in the USA and Canada. Women participated in semi-structured in person interviews that were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim for analysis. Colaizzi's method guided the process. An overarching theme of feeling different permeated the perinatal experiences for the participants. The women's narratives revealed seven themes: Launching pregnancy: A roller coaster ride; having legal and biological concerns: Biology prevails; there is a little person in there: Dealing with pregnancy issues; losing relationships over pregnancy; feeling incomplete as a mother; carving a unique role for oneself; and sadness and regret: non-biological mothers get the postpartum blues, too. The perinatal experience for non-biological lesbian mothers is complicated by the lack of biological and legal substantiation to the infant, few role models, and limited social support for the new role even in countries where lesbian motherhood is legal and generally accepted. Nurse midwives and other health care providers cognizant of these challenges can play an important role in facilitating policy change and positive transition to motherhood for individual members of this population.

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