

Announcing Dreams: Perceived Communication with Baby-to-Be

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Abstract: While dream literature is extensive, including extraordinary dreams and pregnancy dreams, the convergence of the two is limited. Announcing dreams are one type of extraordinary dream, reported by pregnant women, expectant men, their family and community members, that are not well understood. This specific type of dream has been reported across time and place. This article describes how announcing dreams affect pregnant women and expectant men, and highlights Dr. Mascaro's research, as well as historical, interdisciplinary, and cross-cultural accounts of the phenomenon. For those who serve, or work with, pregnant families, acknowledging and attending to their inner world, including dream experiences, can support both men and women to be present to their whole selves.

Keywords: pregnant women, dreaming, expectant men, extraordinary dreams, announcing dream

Humanity's interest in the world of dreams has been documented for centuries (Bonime, 1962; Covitz, 1990; Davis, 2005; Edelstein & Edelstein, 1945; Edgar, 1995; Eggan, 1952; Hall, 1983; Hermansen, 1997; Hobson, Pace-Schott, & Stickgold, 2010; Jung, 1964; Katz, 1997; McNamara, Pace-Schott, Johnson, Harris, & Auerbach, 2011; Meier, 1967; Pettis, 2006). Reported dreams range from the mundane to the extraordinary. The nature of dreams that specifically occur during pregnancy has gained public and professional attention over the past four decades (Evans & Aronson, 2005; Hallett, 1995; Hinze, 1997; Krippner, Bogzaran, & de Carvalho, 2002; Maybruck, 1989); however, significant dreams experienced by pregnant women have not been thoroughly explored. A

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pregnant woman's experience (including perceptions, beliefs, decisions, and actions) has a direct effect on the growing baby (Rossi, 2002; Verny, 2002) that impacts the child at that moment as well as in the future (Huizink, de Medina, Mulder, Visser, & Buitelaar, 2003). This impact occurs on both physiological and psychological levels (Lipton, 2005; Rossi, 2002; Schore, 2003).

A specific type of pregnancy dream, the announcing dream, has been of particular interest among some authors and researchers (Hallett, 2002, 1995; Hinze, 1997; Krippner et al., 2002) because these dreams enhance the subjective experience of pregnancy and impact the lives of those who have them. Announcing dreams occur during pregnancy when the child *in utero* is perceived by the pregnant mother, or expecting father, while she, or he, is asleep (Hallett, 1995, 2002; Krippner et al., 2002; Tucker, 2005; Verny, 2002). In addition, family members and community members have also reported having an announcing dream about the pregnant or expecting person. This dream perception may be visual, sensory, or auditory, leaving the parent to believe that genuine communication with the unborn child has taken place. Unlike ordinary dreams, the announcing dream is particularly vivid, standing out as significant to the dreamer (Bowman, 2001).

According to Bowman (2001), who anecdotally collected hundreds of reports of mothers' experiences and children's memories, "The dreamer, who is usually the mother-to-be, has the distinct and unforgettable sensation of actually meeting the future child in the dream state" (p. 201). For example, one woman was told in her dream that it was highly unlikely that she would ever become pregnant because of a past medical condition. Even so, she continued to try to conceive. She reported:

Then I dreamed the most vivid dream of my life, before or since...He [the child that appeared to her in the dream] was blond, blue-eyed, a beautiful child, and we were calling him "Zak." When I awoke from this dream, I felt more peaceful than I had ever felt and knew, and knew, without question, not only that I would become pregnant, but who the child was and how he looked, long before he was born. Within two weeks I learned that I was indeed pregnant. Throughout my pregnancy, when people asked me whether I wanted a boy or a girl, I would tell them it wasn't a matter of what I wanted – that I already knew the little person inside me, knew it was a boy and that his name was Zak. (Hallett, 2002, p. 37)

The announcing dream experience is unique and profound in that it is reported to occur without notice, and offers insight about the baby before

he/she has been born (Hallett, 2002). It is highly significant for many parents-to-be who have the experience because it creates a new-found sense that they now intimately know their child. Although the scientific literature to date on announcing dreams is sketchy at best, the phenomena are well recognized and have a long, cross-cultural history; thus, they deserve more careful study.

One well-known Western example of an announcing dream concerns the birth of Jesus. The King James version of the Bible states, "But while he [Joseph] thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 1:20). The majority of contemporary Western people in general, however, are unaware of this phenomenon occurring in ordinary life and solid research on it is virtually nonexistent (Bowman, 2001).

Research, as well as anecdotal cases, demonstrate that dreams have significant effects on people, serving to enhance the meaning of life, and uncover veiled realities (Krippner et al., 2002; Morewedge & Norton, 2009). According to anecdotal accounts, specific information perceived through announcing dreams may cause parents to believe they know the child who is coming to them (Bowman, 2001; T. Olson, personal communication, February 5, 2007), in effect serving as a precognitive or predictive dream. Announcing dreams are one way by which parents make meaning of their current life situation. An announcing dream can inform those who work with pregnant and postpartum women, expectant men, and their families, regarding the totality of their subjective reality, including all meaningful experiences, including in the dream state. Attending to pregnant women's and expectant men's dreams is supporting women and men to be present to their whole selves. In addition, psychological experiences, such as dreaming, influence behavior. For example, pregnant women's perceptions of their "baby" through announcing dreams can result in meaningful behavioral and attitudinal change. In fact, certain behavioral changes and decisions have been made as a result of a single announcing dream (J. S., personal communication, August 10, 2009).

Prenatal and perinatal psychology, a discipline recognized in 1981 with a large following in North America, South America and Europe, extends accepted principles of developmental psychology into the prenatal time. According to Maret (2009), "Like child psychology or adolescent psychology, prenatal psychology is the study of the human organism within a particular time, with specific attention given to unique capabilities, limitations, and environmental factors typical of development

at that stage” (p. 9). Unlike other stages of development, prenatal development is affected by the mother’s thoughts, beliefs, emotions, and behaviors (Verny, 1981; 2002). For example, a pregnant women’s decisions to undergo ultrasound examinations (Goldberg & Verny, 2007) or to consume omega-3 fatty acids (Phillips, 2010) are likely to have an effect on prenatal development.

The womb is the environment in which the developing fetus lives. It is during this pre-birth stage of development when genes begin to express, and therefore, affect what the fetus will become. Holliday (2005) explained,

The science of epigenetics is the study of all those mechanisms that control the unfolding of the genetic program for development and determine the phenotypes of differentiated cells. The pattern of gene expression in each of these cells is called the epigenotype. The best known and most thoroughly studied epigenetic mechanism is DNA methylation, which provides a basis both for the switching of gene activities, and the maintenance of stable phenotypes. (p. 500)

Psychological experiences are related to neurochemical and hormonal shifts, thus affecting the entire body. Today, stress is a commonly reported experience. Countless animal studies and a few human studies reveal that prenatal maternal mood, stress, and anxiety are linked to changes in the developing physiology and the brain, as well as future disorders in the child (Charil, Laplante, Vaillancourt, & King, 2010; Glover, O’Conner, & O’Donnell, 2010; Weinstock, 2007). DNA methylation processes typically repress gene activity (Bonetta, 2008) and occur in gametogenesis and early embryogenesis (Holliday, 2005); therefore, the experience of the mother appears to have a direct result in her prenaté’s genetic expression and development. The uterine environment molds the animal and human epigenome (Bradbury, 2003), and maternal behaviors may sculpt the genome in the baby (Bradbury, 2003; Glover et al., 2010; Rossi, 2002), possibly having the potential for long-lasting effects. For example, early stages of development in the womb environment have been linked to adult disease susceptibility (Barker, Osmond, Kajantie, & Eriksson, 2009; Bonetta, 2008).

Indeed, psychological stress is experienced in most pregnancies, even when the pregnancy is intentional (Raphael-Leff, 1990). Sandman et al. (1994) found that “stress and HPA activation can influence behavior and brain mechanisms permanently” in the human fetus (p. 207). In a prospective study of 170 pregnant women, Huizink and colleagues (2003) found stress during pregnancy to be one of the determinants of delay in development, and associated it with lower mental and motor

developmental scores in infancy. Prenatal conditions have also been linked to diseases arising in adulthood (Christensen, 2000).

Because a pregnant mother's thoughts, emotions, decisions, and behaviors affect the developing fetus (Schlotz & Phillips, 2009; Verny, 2002), understanding the impact and significance of announcing dreams has far-reaching implications. For example, such dreams may have an impact on bonding and attachment between the mother and baby, maternal well-being, and decision making regarding the pregnancy. Announcing dreams appear to impact expectant men as well, and may affect bonding. In addition, a greater awareness of this phenomenon might encourage pregnant women and expectant men who have an announcing dream to share their experience with others without fear of ridicule or dismissal. A more thorough understanding may allow health care providers to work with pregnant families more effectively.

Dream Content

Research reveals that some differences exist in the manifest dream content between males and females (Brenneis & Roll, 1975; Domhoff, 2003; Rubinstein & Krippner, 1991), but that during the time of pregnancy, expectant fathers report more dreams than nonexpectant fathers (Zayas, 1988), consistent with those of expectant mothers (Maybruck, 1989; Smith-Cerra, 2007). Changes in dream imagery also occur during pregnancy for both expecting partners (Dagan, Lapidot, & Eisenstein, 2001; Krippner et al., 2002; Zayas, 1988). An early example is King Phillip of Macedonia, whose dreams during his wife's pregnancy confirmed the pregnancy (Krippner et al., 2002). Among certain Australian Aboriginal groups, fathers dream of the child (Akerman, 1977; den Boer, 2012; Merlan, 1986), and it has been said that "every baby must be dreamed by its father before it comes into the world" (Carman & Carman, 1999, p. 11).

Couvade syndrome is a condition by which "pregnancy related symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, and abdominal pain in expectant fathers" are reported (Lipkin & Lamb, 1982, p. 509). Just as Couvade syndrome has been noted among expectant fathers (Brennan, Ayers, Ahmed, & Marshall-Lucette, 2007; Lipkin & Lamb, 1982), it seems reasonable that a father's dream content shifts due to his changing reality (Zayas, 1988). Zayas studied the dreams of 20 married men and found that the dreams of the ten expectant fathers differed from those of the other ten men. The participants recorded their dreams during three two-week periods in their wives' pregnancies. The data were analyzed using content analysis. The dreams of the men with pregnant wives contained

references to the fetal environment, and feelings of loneliness and exclusion during weeks 13 through 16 of the pregnancy. Near the end of the pregnancy, the fathers reported dreams of their babies. Data analysis indicated that for the expectant fathers, unconscious preoccupations were depicted symbolically in dreams and developed throughout their wife's pregnancy.

In addition, Maybruck's (1986) doctoral dissertation study revealed that some couples "envisioned similar themes, characters, or settings, either on the same nights or two subsequent nights" (p. 268). Some expectant couples experience spontaneous (non-incubated) dreams that turn out to have similar content. From her collection of anecdotal reports, Hallett (1995) noted, "Some couples experience shared dreams while expecting a baby" (p. 53).

Koukis' (2007) dissertation compared dream report content between English-speaking North American pregnant women and expectant men. Koukis (2007) analyzed the 64 dream reports gathered from 24 women and 24 men, ages 18 to 42, using the Hall and Van de Castle Scale of Content Analysis. Data analysis showed measurable differences in the dream content of pregnant women and expectant men. Differences in sex norms from past research were significantly distinct from the differences found in Koukis' data (2007). Koukis' study found a common thread in the dream content of pregnant women and expectant men: an increased amount of family members existed for both the men and the women (2007).

Pre-birth Communication

A special category of altered state phenomena associated with pregnancy called "pre-birth communication" has been anecdotally documented, but not scientifically investigated (Carman & Carman, 1999; Hallett, 1995; 2002; Hinze 1997; Verny, 2002). Pre-birth communication, which may occur during dreaming or other states, is an interchange perceived to take place between a person (usually a family member, but especially the mother) and an unborn child pre- or post-conception, or both. Pre-birth communication has been reported to occur through visions, voices, and dreams (Hallett, 1995; Hinze, 1997).

Hallett (1995), who collected numerous anecdotal "pre-birth communication" reports, speculates that the intention may be to simply give courage, or convey love. Sarah Hinze, along with her husband, Brent Hinze, coined the term "pre-birth experience" in the early 1990s to describe events in which people claim to meet their child before birth, during a near-death experience, or through auditory, sensorial, or

telepathic means. Like near-death experience reporters, those who claim to have had a pre-birth experience testify that the experience was not a hallucination or imagined, but instead very real. The Hinzes have been collecting stories about this phenomenon from all over the world since the 1990s (S. Hinze, personal communication, June 20, 2011). These experiences have been reported by men and women.

Announcing Dreams

“Announcing dreams” are a unique type of pre-birth communication between parent (usually the mother) and unborn child that occur during pregnancy (or soon before) in which the unborn child is made known to the mother or father in the dream state, either through visual or auditory channels (Hallett, 1995; Hallett, 2002; Hinze, 1997; Verny, 2002). More than just a dream about a baby, this visual, sensorial, or auditory dream perception leaves the parent with the belief that genuine communication has taken place with the child-to-be. Some parents do not realize that they have conceived until an announcing dream occurs, revealing that the woman is, in fact, pregnant (Hallett, 1995; Hallett, 2002; Hinze, 1997; Sered & Abramovitch, 1992).

The concept *conception dream* or *fertility dream*, which refers to a dream announcing that conception has taken place, dates back to ancient times, such as the announcement of Jesus’ conception to Joseph, mentioned earlier (Matthew 1:20). Such dreams were documented during the Anglo-Saxon conversion to Christianity in 596 A.D. (Davis, 2005). Davis (2005) presented reports of dreams and visions extracted from historical sources and grouped them into eight categories to emphasize the human life cycle. One category was conception. The Jaina text, *Angavijja*, has “a classification system of the beings in the dream” (Wayman, 1967, p. 6), including the unborn. In addition, conception dreams may not reveal the child-to-be, but indicate conception metaphorically (Davis, 2005; Kitzinger, 1978). From her fieldwork, Kitzinger (1978) reported that “in Jamaica a woman expects to have a fertility dream when she becomes pregnant, and it is this rather than the obstetrician’s examination which confirms pregnancy” (pp.78-79).

In the 21st century, announcing dreams have surfaced in reincarnation literature, a controversial field, whose most credible sources began with Ian Stevenson in the 1960s and others who subsequently followed his protocols. When announcing dreams were mentioned, they were in the background of the research because the phenomena of interest were specific to evidence for reincarnation. These studies were typically

case studies and were largely conducted in cultures that believe in reincarnation.

In 2005, Tucker synthesized Stevenson's work, which consisted of thousands of case studies and interviews. The families interviewed claimed that their dreams foretold the coming of a deceased relative's return into the family. Announcing dreams were present in 22% of 1,100 cases examined (Tucker, 2005). Tucker explained:

An announcing dream can occur before the birth of a child. With this feature, a family member, usually the subject's mother, has a dream before or during the pregnancy in which the previous personality either announces that he or she is coming to the expecting mother or asks to come to her. Such dreams usually occur in *same-family* cases, ones in which the previous personality is a deceased member of the subject's family, or in cases in which the subject's mother at least knew the previous personality. (2005, p. 8)

The information gleaned from these cases, however, cannot generalize to a population of pregnant women.

A variety of anecdotal reports indicate that announcing dreams have been known to affect women's personal belief systems, as well as behavior and decision making (Hallett, 1995; 2002; Hinze, 1997; Mascaro, 2013). For example, from one anecdotal report, this author learned that one pregnant woman decided to give her first-born the name that was expressed in an announcing dream, completely convinced that this unexpected communication was from her unborn child. The pregnant woman reported that her son appeared to her in a dream and offered his name to her (T. Olson, personal communication, February 5, 2007).

Another pregnant woman reported that she had reservations and generalized fears about being pregnant and becoming a mother, until several announcing dreams began. Her announcing dreams were recurrent and visual, instead of auditory. She claimed that during these dreams she always "saw" the same black-haired male toddler. She reported that he would just look at her with a smile, and then a sense of calmness and comfort would come over her. Even after awakening, these feelings lasted throughout the day. This young woman believed that her newly-found sense of peace and joy at becoming a mother was the direct result of the dreams. She claimed that her fears and reservations severely diminished. This experience helped her; she decided that she could be a good mother after all (D. Alonzo, personal communication, June 12, 2010). Later, she revealed her surprise when her son was born with a full-head of black hair like the child she had seen in the dreams, because her

husband has blond hair (D. Alonzo, personal communication, September 2, 2010).

Another young woman reported meeting her son-to-be when she was experiencing a lucid dream. She wrote:

I was early in my first trimester, still trying to decide if having a baby at this time in my life was the right thing to do. My partner and I had a very tumultuous relationship. In my dream I sat with a four year old boy with dark hair. I asked him if he was the baby and he wouldn't answer me, but he did tell me he would like to be named Peter and I said no. The dream shook me when I saw him (thus inducing the spontaneous lucidity). I realized that this was the changing point in my life. I felt like this was a person speaking to me. That was the first dream and after that one I knew the baby was sticking around. In the second trimester I had another dream where the little boy came and sat by me. No words were spoken, but he calmed me. Today, my son, named Jet, is a very soothing and gentle person. I do believe that his little spirit got me on track to be his mom, even if I wouldn't name him Peter. (A. Maffettone, personal communication, March 7, 2011)

Another woman shared her experience:

Before I even knew I was pregnant the second time, I dreamed that I had twin girls called Jill and Sarah. Later in the pregnancy, I was looking at some pretty "babies" and kept being strongly drawn to the twins. At fourteen weeks gestation, twins were diagnosed, and I said they would be two girls. Sure enough we now have Beth and Sarah (my husband doesn't like the name Jill). (Hinze, 1997, pp. 30-31)

Similar retrospective responses have been noted following announcing dreams from other women (Hallett, 2002; Hinze, 1997), even when the perceived names were very unusual (Hallett, 1995).

In another anecdote, one young woman shared that she planned to have an abortion until she had a vivid dream in which she whole-heartedly believed that she met the child she was carrying (J.S., personal communication, August 10, 2009). At the time, she did not want to be pregnant and did not have the financial and personal support she desired. Yet, after the dream, she spoke of how her ideas, beliefs, and behaviors shifted due to having that unique dream experience. In this case, she decided not to terminate the pregnancy. Koukis (2009) explained that pregnant women may connect to their unborn through a dream. Love and acceptance of the developing baby were noted among the dream images.

After reviewing the anecdotal reports Hallett (1995) collected, she pointed out that “the frequency of different kinds of announcing dreams varies greatly from one culture to another” (p. 42). Announcing dreams may be experienced diversely from place to place and across different periods of time. Therefore, one cannot assume that a pregnant woman’s dream content, interpretation, or impact will be the same across cultures (Davis-Floyd, 2003; Davis-Floyd & Sargent, 1997; Hall, 2010; Jordan, 1993).

This author’s doctoral dissertation study analyzed the announcing dream reports of 22 pregnant women (Mascaro, 2013). Participants were English-speaking, pregnant (confirmed by medical personnel or home pregnancy text), over 21 years-old, and free of psychiatric history. The mean participant age was 29.36 years. The majority of the participants were employed and had obtained a college education. A variety of religious and spiritual affiliations were represented. The majority resided in the United States. The reported image of the dream child ranged from fetal age to young, elementary-school aged children. Most participants (85%) shared the dream with someone they knew. Several themes emerged from participant’s response to having the dream: emotions, confidence and affirmation, bonding and connection, birth, hospitals and health-care professionals, husband/partner, settings, and breastfeeding. Other themes that emerged involved: catastrophe, lucidity, decision-making regarding the pregnancy, and prediction of the child’s sex (Mascaro, 2013).

The elements present in announcing dreams are fairly common in ordinary dreams, including a variety of positive and negative emotional states, residential dwellings, natural settings, and acquaintances, friends, and family members. Elements that commonly surface in pregnant women’s dreams (Maybruck, 1989) were also found in the data, such as: birthing; hospitals and health-care professionals; spouse, partner, or baby’s father; breastfeeding; catastrophe; and predictions of the child’s sex. Unique to the announcing dream is the presence of the unborn. While the presence of the unborn is viewed as a common theme in pregnancy dreams (Maybruck, 1989), the study’s results suggest that the presence of the unborn is linked to confidence and affirmation (especially in unplanned pregnancies), bonding and connection, and decision-making regarding pregnancy termination (Mascaro, 2013).

For three participants, the dream was the catalyst for making an important decision about the pregnancy. A reported dream said to influence an important decision is supported in the dream literature (Bowater, 2012; Carey, 2010; Edgar, 2006). A pregnant woman’s perception of her baby in a dream, as this study investigated, may be one manifestation by which pregnancy decisions are influenced. This bridges

the impact of decision-making dreams with pregnancy dreams. While literature exists showing a relationship between dreams and political decisions (Bowater, 2012), and dreams and amputee body scheme conflicts (Alessandria, Vetrugno, Cortelli, & Montagna, 2011), nothing has been found to show the relationship between dreams and decisions or conflicts while pregnant.

Some of the pregnant participants in this study (Mascaro, 2013), were contemplating a decision in the waking state about whether to continue the pregnancy or terminate it, and the dream state was an extension of their processing. Pregnant women in this study used the content from the dream to inform waking life contemplations and an upcoming decision. The actions taken by some participants were informed by the dream's content. For example, Maria said the dream "helped me decide what to do...I'm keeping the baby." Krippner et al. (2002) referred to pregnancy dreams among those "considering abortion" and stated, "Dreams may contain metaphors for feeling trapped, being overburdened, or looking frantically for a solution to a problem" (p. 63). The dreams this study differed, in that those contemplating termination had dreams that resulted in increased confidence or affirmation to continue the pregnancy.

With regard to lucidity, one participant reported an out-of-body experience. Participants were asked, "Were you aware that you were dreaming during this dream?" Ten participants (45%) said that they were lucid by answering "yes," in addition to one participant (5%) who responded, "not at first," and another participant (5%), who responded, "I think so." Seven (32%) replied "no." Three (14%) participants were unsure, could not remember, or did not know. While ten participants reported they were lucid during their dreams, only two narratives (9%) showed hallmarks of lucid dreaming, including awareness that one is dreaming, control over dream activities and content, and making decisions regarding dream outcome (Hobson et al., 2010; LaBerge & Rheingold, 1990; Neider, Pace-Schott, Forselius, Pittman, & Morgan, 2011). Tanya's report was the strongest indicator for lucidity. She wrote:

I found myself floating in my bedroom near the ceiling, facing up. I realized I was out-of-body, and immediately began purposely thinking of my baby; I wanted to see if I could interact with it while out-of-body. I wasn't sure how to go about doing this, so I focused on my belly and called to it 'baby, baby, baby.' I felt myself drift in and out of my physical body and tried to stay relaxed and calm so as to prolong the experience. Then I felt the baby move inside my belly; I distinctly felt it kick and twist the lower half of its body. I instinctively felt that it was reacting to me trying to interact with it. Then I woke up.

This report shows that Tanya was aware that she was dreaming, that she formulated intentions, and that she imposed her will in the dream, all of which are hallmarks of purposeful lucid dreaming.

Three dreamers (14%) experienced dreams that had a direct influence on decisions regarding the pregnancy. Maria and Quincy had unplanned pregnancies which they were considering terminating; however, they both changed their minds as a result of their dreams. In reference to termination, Maria stated that the dream “helped me decide what to do...I’m keeping the baby.” Quincy wrote:

I might have considered an abortion at the time of the pregnancy because I had no job, money, or partner. The dream made the person inside me seem very real and concrete, not allowing me to consider such an option...I might have also considered adoption more seriously than I did at the time, but because of the dream I already felt that I could raise him because I had already experienced within the dream what it was to choose a school, to bundle him in warmth and to comfort him.

Tanya’s dream influenced her thoughts about upcoming prenatal care decisions, specifically whether to have a second trimester blood test for Down’s syndrome and other defects. Tanya wrote:

I feel like I am much more bonded to the baby, like I have a real connection with it now that I didn’t before, like I have met the little person inside me. My decisions are very much likely to be influenced by this experience. Today my OBGYN scheduled me for my 2nd trimester blood test for Down’s syndrome and other defects, due in a couple weeks’ time. However should the tests come back positive, I don’t think that I could bring myself to terminate the pregnancy now that I feel this bonded feeling with my baby. I almost don’t want to have the test because I am not interested in knowing the result, and may not go ahead with it now.

All three of these women had a history of miscarriages or terminated pregnancies, and were older, ranging in age between 32 and 37 years (Mascaro, 2013). Dreams and their impact on the dreamer, such as these, have direct implications for the fields of medicine and psychology.

In addition, fathers-to-be also are the recipients of announcing dreams and are sometimes contacted first, before the pregnant mother (den Boer, 2012; Hallett, 1995; 2002; Hinze, 1994; Merlan, 1986). One expecting

father told of a dream that evolved over a period of three nights. By the third dream (after the third night), he “awoke with tears streaming down” his face and realized he “had seen the spirit of our unborn baby” (Hinze, 1994, p. 70). This father also reported that one of his most cherished possessions is a particular photograph of his daughter which looks just like she appeared in his dream.

In 1954, on Tiwi Island, Jane C. Goodall asked a mother of four whether a man ever dreamed his child before his wife told him she was pregnant. Goodall was told the following:

A man [she gave his name] dreamed of his unborn child who was crippled. The *pitapitui* told his father that although he was firstborn, he had been crippled during an aerial attack during World War II and had to go first to America to be treated for his leg. But, he told his father, when I am healed I will come back to be born. Meanwhile I'll send my youngest siblings first. When he was eventually born his father recognized him because of his crooked leg. (Jane C. Goodall's 1954 Tiwi Island fieldnotes)

Siegel's 1982 doctoral study on expectant father's dreams showed that 21% recorded dreams about babies in their journal over a two-week period. Alex, a 31 year-old engineer, reported a dream during the second trimester:

I am standing on a street corner carrying my baby fetus under my shirt against my chest. I have my hands cupped over the fetus to protect it. It is moving, and people ask me what it is. I say, “It's my baby!” Someone tries to smash the fetus by hitting my chest. I become enraged at the person and pick him up and throw him into the street. (Siegel, 2002, p.82)

This author's 2014 post-doctoral study on the announcing dreams of expectant men, was uneventful. The online dissertation survey was replicated for men and although the recruitment period doubled in length of time, only six men began the screening process. No single participant completed the questionnaire. Even while men, generally, are not involved in pregnancy, and there is no cultural template for this experience in contemporary Western culture, some men report announcing dreams and dreams of the direct involvement of their baby-to-be, as noted above.

Conclusion

Announcing dreams can be experienced by both parents across time and place. Announcing dreams not only impact the pregnant mother, but the father as well. The resulting impact may affect big decisions (medical procedures) and small decisions (child's name), as well as emotions and attitudes. Emergent themes of confidence and affirmation, and bonding and connection, from this author's 2013 doctoral dissertation study, were noteworthy. For example, dream reports centering around these themes, in particular, may act as a protective evolutionary factor, especially for first-time mothers, or those who had never birthed a full-term living child, and those with unplanned pregnancies (Mascaro, 2013). Announcing dreams may also support pregnant families for the life transition that is taking place.

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