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**Title**

*Recreating the Village: The Patient Experience with Group Perinatal Care*

**Priority 1 (Research Category)**

Women's health

**Presenters**

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**Abstract**

Context: Group perinatal care (GPC) offers a “one stop” approach to clinical care and perinatal education. It has been shown to be associated with high levels of patient satisfaction and improved clinical outcomes. Co-facilitation of GPC (including postpartum care) by midwives (MW) and family medicine residents (FMR) in a family health team (FHT) has not been previously assessed. Objective: To explore the experience of participants in the academic FHT model of GPC. Study design: Descriptive qualitative study using semi-structured telephone interviews with participants who had completed GPC. Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Thematic analysis was conducted by team members. Setting: Academic family health team (FHT), Toronto, Canada. Participants: 18 patients who had participated in GPC at the Mount Sinai Academic FHT who delivered between November 7, 2016 and October 26, 2018. Findings: The major theme was the value of the relationships established and the positive consequences of those relationships. Participants describe relationships with health care providers that were built on comprehensiveness, continuity and credibility. Relationships with other GPC participants were facilitated but also developed organically, continued outside the structure of GPC and persisted well beyond perinatal care. The consequences of these relationships included creating support networks, shared knowledge and experience with their partners, improved self-confidence during the pregnancy and labour journey, decreased anxiety and extended commitment to breastfeeding. Conclusions: Participants in GPC at the Mount Sinai Academic FHT, in essence, became part of a social network for their labour, birth and early parenting journey by developing relationships with their healthcare providers, partners and fellow participants through the group process. This resulted in informational and emotional support which positively affected their experience. In particular, the contributions to self-confidence and decreased anxiety deserve further exploration.