



The Perspectives and Practices of Women on Paternity Fraud in Jamaica: Post COVID-19

Paul A. Bourne¹, Pheonie Lewis², Kimberly Griffiths², Peta-Gay Coleman², Lyshanya Whitely², Avonelle Dennis², James Fallah⁴, Calvin Campbell⁵, Clifton Foster⁶, Caroline McLean³, Tabitha Muchee⁷, Advella L. Meikle²

¹Department of Institutional Research, Northern Caribbean University, Mandeville, Manchester, Jamaica, WI.

²Department of Nursing, Northern Caribbean University, Mandeville, Manchester, Jamaica, WI.

³Department of Innovation and Simulation, Northern Caribbean University, Mandeville, Manchester, Jamaica, WI.

⁴Department of Dental Hygiene, Northern Caribbean University, Mandeville, Manchester, Jamaica, WI.

⁵Department of Mathematics and Engineering, Northern Caribbean University, Mandeville, Manchester, Jamaica, WI.

⁶Department of Biology, Chemistry, and Environmental Sciences, Northern Caribbean University, Mandeville, Manchester, Jamaica, WI.

⁷Department of Nutrition and Dietetics, Northern Caribbean University, Mandeville, Manchester, Jamaica, WI.

Abstract

Background: There is a lack of scientific research on Jamaican women's perceptions of paternity fraud.

Aim: This study explores the prevalence of paternity fraud (jackets) in Jamaica and the reasons for some women committing paternity fraud.

Material and Method: This study used a primary cross-sectional survey design on Jamaican women's perceptions of paternity fraud. Researchers conducted online surveys using questionnaires and a stratified random sampling method to determine the sample size.

Results: The analysis of this study revealed that the most common reason for committing paternity fraud, as stated by 15.1% of women, was that "The man was financially stable. Of the total respondents, 64.1% of the women believe paternity testing should be mandatory in Jamaica, while 427 women oppose this view. 34.9% (n=413) condemned paternity fraud, and 51.6% (n=608) said that women who commit paternity fraud should receive punishment. Four hundred nineteen persons (n=608) said those women should receive a "monetary penalty", 122 persons said they should be "Imprisoned for a period to be stated by the judge", and the remainder said those women should not receive punishment.

Conclusions: Our main findings are that financial security is the primary determinant of paternity fraud. Though women generally condemn paternity fraud, most believe women who

perform such acts should not receive punishment. The findings indicate the need for further research to understand women's perspectives on paternity fraud.

Keywords: Paternity fraud, jackets, paternity testing, Jamaican women, Post COVID-19.

Introduction

Despite its prevalence, limited research exists on paternity fraud in Jamaica. Misattributed paternity and paternal discrepancy are phrases commonly used by persons to describe this [1]. In the Jamaican language, the term 'jacket' is synonymous with paternity fraud. In essence, paternity fraud occurs when the mother identifies a man as the biological father of her child, knowing the man is not the child's biological father. In other cases, she only suspects that the child has no genetic link to the father she named on the birth certificate. The term 'jacket' may refer to the act of paternity fraud or the child that results from the act of paternity fraud.

There are several reasons women commit paternity fraud. According to a renowned psychologist, Dr Newman, some of these reasons include; fear of losing a partner or relationship, multiple sexual partners, shame and criticism, and being a victim of rape [4]. Women keep paternity secrets because revealing them may destroy the family and interpersonal relationships. In addition, children are the main reason women give for keeping their paternity secrets. Women's appreciation of the importance of the existing social bonds between the father and child could prevent them from exposing their paternity secret [2]. Women victims of domestic violence do not want to suffer more battering by revealing paternity uncertainty. Similarly, female rape victims keep paternity issues secret and refuse to disclose them to the biological father. Though some women indeed commit paternal discrepancies intentionally, it is also true that in some cases, the woman is uncertain of true paternity at the time. The mother incorrectly identified the father based on her personal beliefs.

Furthermore, women keep secrets about paternity because they are uncertain about the child's paternity. However, it would be paternity uncertainty and not paternity fraud. Another example is if a woman had several relationships or a one-night stand, she might find herself uncertain about the paternity and may typically assume that the father of the child is the one with the most enduring sexual relationship [5].

The giving of jackets is prevalent in Jamaican society. A journal article titled, 'Paternity fraud: examining its causes, the tort of deceit and victims compensation' states: "According to Herbert Gayle, some 25 per cent of Jamaican men are unknowingly raising children that are not biologically theirs. Furthermore, the leading anthropologist at the University of the West Indies asserts that DNA testing required by the US embassy in Kingston often reveals embarrassing figures of the number of men who were deceived about the children they believed were their own. Similarly, a 2019 report by Polygenics Consulting firm, a Jamaican firm that offers DNA testing, explained that all the paternity tests conducted since 2015 indicated that 70 per cent of the men who presented themselves were not the father of the children they presumed to be. A Jamaican woman knowingly names the wrong man as her child's father on the birth certificate

and there is no recourse in the courts for the male, but there are other jurisdictions in which this is not the case [5].

A man might raise concerns about whether a child is his biological offspring. He may even request a paternity test. Men may have doubts about paternity, including; previous or known infidelities of their partner, not being married, the relationship being new or only a one-night stand, a surprise pregnancy, and the child not resembling him. Deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) is a paternity test used to decipher whether a man is a child's biological father. It can be costly to perform, especially for someone living in a developing country like Jamaica. In 2021, the Jamaican government passed a law making DNA paternity testing at birth mandatory to reduce paternal discrepancies in the country. Dr Herbert Gayle, a sociologist and university researcher at the University of the West Indies, said that this might increase the levels of domestic violence in the country as men will be upset knowing that a child they invested in emotionally and financially is not biologically theirs [3].

Theoretical Framework

George Homans social exchange theory proposed that interactions occur on principles of exchange and reward vs cost. Humans choose high-reward (benefits) relationships and low-cost (risks) relationships. For example, this theory relates to the research topic because some women may commit paternity fraud because they are likely to choose a more financially stable partner to raise their child or children. After all, the biological father is unwilling or may have difficulty paying for the child's expenses, such as Food, clothing, housing, and tuition [6].

Literature Review

Quite a few pieces of literature exist about paternity fraud in Jamaica. However, a complete study has not been done on women's perception of the issue. Many Jamaicans often joke about the case of men raising "jackets", which is a sensitive topic for those affected. Paternity fraud, also known as misattributed paternity, is when a man is incorrectly identified as the biological father of a child [7], which can happen whether knowingly or unknowingly.

Though the issue of paternity fraud is a joke to some, Dr Herbert Gayle believes paternity testing should be mandatory at birth. Though it is not certain as to the extent of paternity fraud in Jamaica, a study by Dr Herbert Gayle in 2016 showed that 25% of men mind "jackets." Furthermore, in 2019, a company that offers DNA testing in Jamaica revealed that 70% of men tested are victims of paternity fraud. Dr Clarke's recommendation to have DNA testing done at birth has been raised as an impertinent issue. He thinks DNA testing will help reduce the incidence of domestic violence against women, even though enough evidence has not been gathered to support such claims [7] [8].

Many women in Jamaica are affected by socioeconomic challenges. Hence they give men who are "well-to-do" children that are not biologically theirs. However, many women perceive this as no issue because they are getting the financial support they need for their child(ren) to be raised well. Infidelity is also a significant factor that influences women to commit paternity fraud. In many cases, when the man of a household spends much time away from home for whatever

reasons, women may seek companionship elsewhere. In such cases, if pregnancy occurs, the woman will name her partner as the child's father to not cause trouble.

Women who commit paternity fraud do so based on genetics. They may want a child of a specific skin tone, so they have a lover of a different ethnicity. Men are now discovering how cunning women can be and are getting more paternity tests done. Even in divorce cases, men try to ascertain the paternity of children conceived during marriage. [10] A paternity test that indicates that a man is not the biological father is a sure sign of infidelity, and it may conjure feelings of betrayal and anger which may lead to a deterioration in the father-child relationship and the child no longer receives support from the "father"[9].

Here are some statements from women about their thoughts on paternity fraud. One woman said, "Well it's not right. Suppose they don't know who the father is because they have more than one partner and then they don't know? It's not right but sometimes things happen. It can affect a family because that man might want to find his child and that child might want to find her father." Another posited, "if a woman gives a man a 'jacket', it's wickedness. If you tell him today that it is his, one day he must find out because the child probably doesn't look like the father." [10]

We are all facing economic restrictions along with social and cultural challenges. Therefore, more women will deliberately commit paternity fraud, and more men will fall prey to fathering "jackets". However, many women fail to realise that under the Registration Act, they can be fined up to \$250,000 or serve three months in prison. [10] [11]

Methods & Materials

The study used primary cross-sectional research survey design data [15] on women's perception of paternity fraud in Jamaica. This quantitative research used an online survey method to ascertain data in the fulfilment of the study. The researchers used the Statistical Institute of Jamaica's 2018 mid-year 18+ years old female population of Jamaica (i.e., 1,023,356) to determine the sample size (1067 female Jamaicans) by way of 95% confidence level and a 3% margin of error. A stratified random sampling technique was used to collect data from 1067 females across the fourteen (14) parishes of Jamaica [12-14], and established literature was used to guide the research process, including the survey design [17-19].

The research team formulated sixteen (17) close-ended questions to collect vital information for this research. Four (4) demographic questions and thirteen (13) other questions were specific to determining levels of paternity fraud in Jamaica and how women felt about other women who did this act. Researchers disseminated this research using a web-based survey [16], making it simpler to reach the targeted study and allowing respondents to access the questionnaire more efficiently [13].

The researcher shared the purpose of the research and specific instructions on answering the questionnaire with the respondents. The research team ensured and maintained the respondents' rights to confidentiality and privacy by not requesting any personal identifications that would determine individuals in the sample. The data collection period was from October 2 to November

10, 2022. The responses from the data collection were analysed using the IBM Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for Windows, Version 29.0. Researchers used tables with titles and explanations for the data display [14]. The analysed data was displayed using frequencies, percentages, and tables.

Findings

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the women population sample, n=1192. The age group with the highest number of persons in the selection was 18-23 years, making up 17.1% of the sample size. The age group with the least number of persons in the sample was 60+ years, which only comprised 7.0% of the sample size. The majority of the sample was from the parish of Portland. 76.0% of the respondents (n=888) were biological mothers. Twenty-four persons (2%) did not state whether or not they were mothers. 46.0% (n=505) of the respondents, which is the majority, had 2 to 5 children. 16.7% (n=183) of the women sample had no children.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the sampled female respondents

Variable	Frequency	%
Age Group		
18-23 years	204	17.1
24-29 years	200	16.8
30-35 years	187	15.7
36-41 years	161	13.5
42-47 years	141	11.8
48-53 years	121	10.2
54-59 years	94	7.9
60+ years	84	7.0
Area of residence		
Manchester	80	6.7
Portland	108	9.1
St. James	48	4.0
St. Thomas	63	5.3
Westmoreland	100	8.4
St. Elizabeth	107	9.0
St. Catherine	71	6.0
Clarendon	70	5.9
St. Andrew	95	8.0
St. Mary	61	5.1
Trelawny	97	8.2
Kingston	92	7.8
Hanover	91	7.7
St. Ann	104	8.8
Parental status		
Mother	888	76.0
Not a mother	280	24.0

Number of biological children		
0	183	16.7
1	266	24.2
2 to 5	505	46.0
6+	143	13.0

Table 2 presents an assessment of paternity. The majority of the sample (48.8%; n=576) stated that all their children were from the same father. The remainder had children with multiple men. Six hundred fifteen of the respondents said that their child/ren's father did not have any doubts about the child/ren being theirs. One hundred seventy-seven of the respondents stated that the fathers only had doubts before the child was born, and 124 respondents said that the father of their child/ren verbalised having doubts about their paternity.

Table 2: Assessment of paternity

Variable	Frequency	%
Are all your children from the same father?		
Yes	576	48.8
No	324	27.5
Not relevant	280	23.7
Has the father of the child/ren ever verbalised to you that they had doubts about the child/ren being theirs?		
No	615	51.9
Yes, but only before the child was born	177	14.9
Yes	124	10.5
No response	270	22.8

Table 3 presents women's thoughts on mandatory paternity testing in Jamaica. When asked, 64.1% of the women said paternity testing should be required in Jamaica before the father signs the birth certificate. The majority (52.2%) chose multiple reasons why paternity testing should be mandatory in Jamaica. The most common response, however, was, "Men should not be forced to father a child that is not biologically his". One hundred twenty-six people gave this particular response. Of the 427 women that said paternity testing should not be mandatory in Jamaica, the majority (30.1%, n=138) stated that the reason for their choice was that "It is against the right of autonomy and free will".

Table 3: Thoughts on mandatory paternity testing in Jamaica

Variable	Frequency	%
Do you think paternity testing should be mandatory in Jamaica before a father signs the birth certificate?		
Yes	763	64.1
No	427	35.9
If the answer above was yes, why?		
Men should not be forced to father a child that is not biologically his	126	16.5
To prevent future complications in the relationship	74	9.7

To let the man feel at ease about being the child's father	66	8.7
It will reduce promiscuity in women	24	3.1
It will reduce the number of men with 'jackets' in Jamaica	74	9.7
Multiple responses	398	52.2
If it was no, why?		
It will increase domestic violence	111	24.2
It is against the right of autonomy and free will	138	30.1
It will increase the number of single mothers in Jamaica	93	20.3
It may delay the process of having the child being registered	32	7.0
It may lead to a breakdown in trust in the relationship	85	18.5

Table 4 represents the assessment of paternity fraud (jackets) in Jamaica. 87.9% of the respondents claimed that they had never knowingly given a child to the incorrect man. 69.9% said they would do a paternity test on their child/ren. 67.7% of the respondents claimed that they knew of women who committed paternity fraud. Seven hundred twenty-five respondents selected multiple reasons they thought women committed paternity fraud. The most common reason was, "The man is financially stable." 15.1% of the women chose 50.8% stated that they would "Accept it and be a single mother" if the paternity test revealed that their partner was not the biological father of their child/ren.

Table 4: Assessment of paternity fraud in Jamaica

Variable	Frequency	%
Have you knowingly given a child to a man that is not his?		
Yes	142	12.1
No	1030	87.9
Would you be willing to do a paternity test on your child/ren?		
Yes	818	69.9
No	352	30.1
Do you know women who have given jackets (i.e. paternity fraud) to a Jamaican man?		
Yes	801	67.7
No	382	32.3
What do you think are some reasons women give their child/ren to the wrong man?		
The man is financially stable	179	15.1
The man is loving and kind	47	4.0
They do not want the man to know they cheated	114	9.6
They do not know who the true father of the child is	123	10.4
Multiple responses	725	61.0
If the paternity test was done and your partner was not the biological father, what would you do?		
Accept it and be a single mother	593	50.8
Apologise and ask for forgiveness	415	35.6
Hide the results and lie about it	159	13.6

Table 5 presents women's feelings towards other women who commit paternity fraud in Jamaica. The majority of the respondents, 34.9% (n=413), stated paternity fraud should be "condemned". 51.6% (n=608) said that women who commit paternity fraud should receive punishment. Of these respondents (n=608), 419 persons said those women should receive a "monetary penalty", 122 persons said those women should be "Imprisoned for a period to be stated by the judge", and the remaining said those women should receive both types of punishment (monetary penalty and imprisonment).

Table 5: Women’s feelings towards other women who commit paternity fraud in Jamaica

Variable	Frequency	%
How would you feel about women who knowingly give a child to the wrong father?		
No way at all	157	13.3
A little bad	263	22.2
A lot bad	350	29.6
Condemn such actions	413	34.9
Do you think that women who commit paternity fraud should be punished?		
Yes	608	51.6
No	571	48.4
If your response to Question 15 is yes, how should they be punished?		
Imprisoned for a period to be stated by the judge	122	11.8
Monetary penalty	419	40.4
No, they should not be punished	425	40.9
Multiple responses	72	6.9

Table 6 presents a cross-tabulation between knowingly committed paternity fraud and age cohort. Of the 12.1% of the sampled respondents who knowingly committed paternity fraud (n=142 female Jamaicans), a disaggregation is provided based on their practice due to their age cohorts. Eighteen and three tenths per cent of those ages 54-59 years have knowingly given a child to a man that is not his compared to 15.0% of those ages 42-47 years, 15.7% of those ages 36-47 years and 13.1% of those ages 60+ years ($\chi^2(7) = 13.959, P = 0.052$). The findings mentioned above speak to the degree of moral crimes occurring in Jamaican homes.

Table 6

Knowingly Committed Paternity Fraud	Age cohort								Total
	18-23	24-29	30-35	36-41	42-47	48-53	54-59	60+	
	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)
Yes	6.6 (13)	11.2 (22)	9.8 (18)	15.7 (25)	15.9 (22)	11.6 (14)	18.3 (17)	13.1 (11)	12.1 (142)
No	93.4 (184)	88.8 (175)	90.2 (165)	84.3 (134)	84.1 (116)	88.4 (107)	81.7 (76)	86.9 (73)	87.9 (1030)
Total	197	197	183	159	138	121	93	84	1172

Table 7 presents a cross-tabulation between knowingly committed paternity fraud and being a biological mother. Of the 11.6% of the sampled respondents who have knowingly committed paternity fraud (n=133 female Jamaicans), a disaggregation of their practice is provided by their biological status. Fourteen and one-tenth per cent of those who are biological mothers have knowingly given a child to a man that is not his compared to 3.0% of respondents who are not biological mothers ($\chi^2(2) = 24.406, P < 0.001$).

Table 7: A cross-tabulation between knowingly committed paternity fraud and being a biological mother

Knowingly Committed Paternity Fraud		Being a biological mother		Total
		Yes	No	
		% (n)	% (n)	% (n)
	Yes	14.1 (125)	3.0 (8)	11.6 (133)
	No	85.9 (761)	97.0 (256)	88.4 (1017)
Total		886	264	1150

Table 8 presents a cross-tabulation between knowingly committed paternity fraud and the father questioning the child's paternity. 12.1% of the sampled respondents were those who have knowingly committed paternity fraud (n=142 female Jamaicans). A disaggregation of their practice is provided from the perspective of the fathers questioning their paternity. Only 8% of those who do not question the paternity of their child had a child that is not theirs. Thirty-four per cent of males who questioned the paternity of a child had a child that was not theirs compared to 26.0% of respondents who questioned paternity before birth given a child that is not theirs ($\chi^2(3) = 120.513, P < 0.001$).

Table 8: A cross-tabulation between knowingly committed paternity fraud and being a biological mother

Knowingly Committed Paternity Fraud		Father questioning the paternity of the child				Total
		No	Yes, but only before the child was born	Yes	No response	
		% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)
	Yes	7.8 (48)	26.0 (46)	33.9 (42)	2.3 (6)	12.1 (142)
	No	92.2 (564)	74.0 (131)	66.1 (82)	97.7 (251)	87.9 (1028)
Total		612	177	124	257	1170

Table 9 presents a cross-tabulation between knowingly committed paternity fraud and supporting mandatory paternity testing. Seventeen and two-tenths per cent of females who do not support compulsory paternity testing have intentionally given a child to a father that is not his compared to 9.2% of respondents who support mandatory testing ($\chi^2(1) = 16.164, P < 0.001$). The findings revealed that even females who knowingly have committed paternity fraud would support compulsory testing, which speaks to the psychological state of females in Jamaica.

Table 9: A cross-tabulation between knowingly committed paternity fraud and supporting mandatory paternity testing

Knowingly Committed Paternity Fraud		Supporting mandatory paternity testing		Total
		Yes	No	
		% (n)	% (n)	
	Yes	9.2 (69)	17.2 (73)	12.1 (142)
	No	90.8 (678)	82.8 (351)	87.9 (1029)
Total		747	424	1171

Discussion

Paternity fraud referred to as "jacket" in Jamaica and other societies as misattributed paternity or paternal discrepancy is a global phenomenon [20-26]. Having a "jacket" occurs when there is an incorrect identification of a male as the biological father of a child. Wintour [24] indicated that false identification of "biological fathers" occurred; among one in every 500 British males, and in 2016, the figure worsened to one in every 50 [23]. The current study is a stratified random sample of female Jamaicans aged 18+ years, and 12 in 100 indicated they knowingly and wrongly gave fatherhood to Jamaican men. This study highlights that paternity fraud is higher in Jamaica than in Britain and speaks to the high degree of deception in Jamaican society, which begins in the homes.

In Jamaica, paternity fraud is a topic with little research. This study is among the first to attempt to measure and investigate women's perspectives on this crucial problem. Based on the findings, 13% of women had more than six biological children. Those with two to five children were 46% of participants, while those with only one biological child amounted to 24.2% of respondents. The findings also revealed that 16.7% of respondents had no biological children, and the majority of respondents, 76% are biological mothers. Researchers asked, "are your children from the same biological father?" 48.8% of respondents said yes, 27.5% said no, and another 23.7% said it was irrelevant. Another question asked was, "has the father of your child or children ever verbalised that he had doubts about the children being his?" The highest being, 51.9% of respondents, said no, and the least, 25.4%, said yes. Although only 12.1% of females ages 18+ indicated knowingly incorrectly ascribing fatherhood to a male, 30.1% of the sampled females indicated that they would not have deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) testing done on their child/ren.

The current findings have indicated that some women intentionally create paternal inconsistencies; there are also instances when the mother was unsure about the child's genuine father. Because of her convictions, the mother unintentionally gave her child to the wrong father [5]. Therefore, researchers can argue that women may intentionally or unintentionally give men children that are not biologically theirs. Similarly, to the question, "have you knowingly given a child to a man that is not his?" 12.1% of respondents said yes, while 87.9% said no. Some females among the 87.9% that said "no" perhaps had doubts about the child's correct biological father. However, they did not perform DNA tests to confirm or deny any uncertainties. Researchers asked a related question: "do you know women who have given jackets (i.e., paternity fraud) to a Jamaican man?" 67.7% said yes, while 32.3% said no. Researchers can also

extrapolate here that some females of the 67.7% had no actual proof that the women they knew committed paternity fraud. They might have only assumed this because of their preconceived notions about what or who a "jacket" is.

Newman, a well-known psychologist, stated that women commit paternity fraud for various reasons, including; fear of losing a partner or relationship, having multiple sexual partners, experiencing shame and criticism, or even being victims of rape [4]. Through this investigation, we have established the truth of some of Newman's theories, as 15.1% of women stated that some women may give their children to the wrong man because the other man is more financially stable. 4.0% of the respondents said the man is kind and loving. 9.6% of respondents said that women do not want their partners to know they cheated. 10.4% stated they did not see the child's true father, and 61.0% provided multiple responses. With this significant gap between whether or not paternity fraud occurred, researchers asked, "would you be willing to do a paternity test on your child?" 69.9% stated yes, while 30.1% said no.

The response to another similar question revealed that 64.1% of the respondents believe paternity testing should be mandatory in Jamaica before the father signs the child's birth certificate, while 35.9% believe it should not be required. The justification as to why paternity testing should be mandatory in Jamaica before the father signs the child's birth certificate is that, according to 16.5% of respondents, men should not be forced to father a child that is not biologically his. 9.7% stated that it would prevent future complications in the relationship, and another 9.7% indicated that it would reduce the number of jackets within Jamaica. 8.7% of respondents said that it would let the man feel at ease about being the child's father, and 3.1% said that it would reduce promiscuity in women. In contrast, 24.2% of women believe paternity testing should not be mandatory in Jamaica because it will increase the risk of domestic violence. Another 30.1% of respondents believe this is against the right of autonomy and free will. 20.3% think it will increase the number of single mothers in Jamaica. 7.0% believe that it will delay the child's registration process, and 18.5% think it will lead to a breakdown in the relationship.

Women victims of domestic violence and rape do not want to suffer more battering by revealing paternity uncertainty and therefore keep paternity issues secret and refuse to disclose the biological father [5], which may be one of the reasons why 13.6% of respondents stated that they would hide the results and lie about it if they were to do a paternity test. The partner was not the biological father of the child. Another 50.8% of respondents said they would accept it and be single mothers. Moreover, 35.6% stated that they would apologise and ask for forgiveness. However, when the women were asked to give their views on other women who knowingly gave a child to the wrong father, 13.3% said that they felt no way at all about it. 22.2% said they felt terrible towards women who knowingly gave a child to the wrong father. 29.6% said they feel much worse, and 34.9% stated they condemn such actions.

Women were then asked to state whether or not they believed other women who committed paternity fraud should be punished. 51.6% said yes, and 48.4% said no. The age groups 18-23 years and 24-29 years are the age groups that most say women should not be punished for committing paternity fraud. This is perhaps because these particular age groups are more sexually active and with multiple partners and would be more than likely guilty of committing

paternity fraud. Of the women who answered affirmatively, 11.8% thought that people who commit such crimes should be imprisoned for a period determined by the judge, while 40.4% said a monetary penalty would suffice. However, most respondents (40.9%) felt they should receive no punishment. This finding may be related to the fact that women are frequent targets of sexual assault, and it may be necessary for them to withhold the biological father's identity for their safety. Additional factors, as mentioned above, may include; the mother's fear of broken families brought on by infidelity and her desire to find her children the most emotionally, mentally, spiritually, and financially stable fathers possible.

The deception associated with paternity fraud in Jamaica has some historical context dating back to slavery [27], which appears to have continued in contemporary society, post-emancipation Jamaica. Charles [27] noted that during slavery, many females in Jamaica were impregnated by plantation owners. There is no evidence from the literature that enslavers respected these women or accepted paternity for the children. A deduction can be made from Charles' work [27] that paternity was given to Black enslaved males, or many single mothers emerged from the sexual exploitation of enslaved females in Jamaica. With information from this study indicating that financial resources were a factor in determining false paternity, then it means that many Jamaican females, who are promiscuous, would not support DNA testing as this could destroy this source of support for their children. A high revelation of the current finding is that 35.0% of the female Jamaicans 18+ years do not support DNA testing and 30.1% indicated their unwillingness to do DNA testing, and those results may be owing to the economic base they receive from ascribing fatherhood to male Jamaicans. The rationale for such a perspective is enveloped in the current findings, where 13.6% of female Jamaicans ages 18+ years indicated that they would concede the result if it established paternity fraud.

The issue of paternity fraud in Jamaica lies between 11% and 31%, which is in keeping with other studies on the matter [28-30]. Bellis et al. [28], reviewing studies on paternity fraud, indicated that the rates were 0.8% and 30%, which speaks to the global moral crime that has public health and socioeconomic consequences [26]. A critical finding that emerges from this is that even women who support mandatory paternity testing have committed paternity fraud (9.2%), and 34% of men who questioned paternity were given a child that is not his, and 26% of men who questioned paternity at birth was given a child that is not his. Another important finding is that irrespective of the ages of females in Jamaica; they commit paternity fraud. This moral crime indicates a dysfunctional society [29], which accounts for much of the social deviance in Jamaican society.

Conclusion

This study determined women's perception of paternity fraud in Jamaica. At the end of our research, we discovered that women commit paternity fraud for various reasons, including the man being financially stable and adequately caring for the child and the woman not wanting their partners to know that they were unfaithful. On the issue of mandatory paternity testing at birth, many of our respondents think it should be made compulsory because men should not be forced to father children that are not biologically theirs.

Some women condemn paternity fraud, while others see nothing wrong with it. Of our 1,192 respondents, 40.4% of the women blame paternity fraud and think that this action should be punished by monetary penalty. However, 40.9% believe women should not be penalised for committing paternity fraud. In summary, our study concluded that paternity fraud is a real issue in our society, which needs further discussion to determine how such actions can influence other areas of life.

Recommendations

The nature of the study is such that the following are some recommendations: 1) Mandatory child support payments, 2) Mandatory paternity tests, 3) Implementation of legal action, 4) Enact harsher penalties for offenders, 5) Pass into law a limit to the number of children a man can father, and 6) Monitor the test sites to eliminate fraudulent results.

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