

I attended the virtual presentation given by Dr. Deirdre Cooper Owens, organized by Exploring Social Justice Series titled “The Long Arm of Slavery in the Development of American Gynecology” on Thursday, February 25, 2021 at 1030 AM.

I chose this event because I believe that it's important to understand the history of obstetrics and gynecology in this country. I think the more we know, the more we can move toward change. It's important to know how black women were treated and experimented on by white male doctors so we, as allies, can point out the continued mistreatment we see today. It's sad to think that there was a time in history when so many people believed that black women couldn't feel pain, or not as much pain as white women. Dr. Owens said that people believed some very dangerous things in the past, and somehow it seems at least a portion of those beliefs have been passed on from generation to generation. As a doula I have seen black birthing people ignored, whispered about, and even have medical treatment and procedures done to them without consent or against their outright refusal. Doulas, Midwives, and other medical professionals can play a critical role in centering these birthing people of color, humanizing them to the medical world, and demanding appropriate treatment. Nobody that is seeking medical care should be being harmed, but they are. Medical racism is real, it's obvious, it's ugly, and it has got to be stopped. The solution has already been given and has been proven to be effective. There must be more doulas of color, more midwives of color, more Obstetricians of color, more Pediatricians of color, more Neonatologists of color...there needs to be more people of color caring for people of color in every community in our country. That is the way to save birthing people of color and their babies from harm and death. I, as a white woman, can help by supporting this in my own community.