

Barrier to nutrients intake during pregnancy: A qualitative study

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Adequate maternal nutrition during pregnancy is the window of the opportunity to strengthen the health status of mother and fetus to reduce the risk of adverse birth outcomes, such as pre-term birth and low birth weight. In Pakistan, after conceiving pregnancy the food intake for pregnant women drastically decreases due to socio-cultural barriers related to food stigma. The objective of the present study was to explore the major barriers of nutritious food intake during pregnancy. The data were collected from pregnant women through In-depth interviews and focus group discussions. The key informants (lady health workers, midwives, nurses, and gynaecologist) were also interviewed to assess the food intake patterns of pregnant women. Before data collection the research ethics were strictly followed. The collected data were analyzed through thematic analysis. Seven major barriers were identified that limit the food intake of pregnant women. Low food intake due to pregnancy sickness, fear of healthy child, household

decision making of food intake of pregnant women, concept of hot and cold food, fear of high blood pressure lack of affordability of nutritious foods, and lack of awareness about diet during pregnancy were found major barriers that hinders the intake of nutritious food during pregnancy. All the nutrient intake barriers during pregnancy are socially and culturally constructed. When women get pregnant, they became choosy for food intake that leads to a number of mother and child health complications. It is suggested that the misconception of food intake during pregnancy should be discouraged in antenatal care visits through proper counselling. It is also suggested that government should launch policy measures to provide the food supplements to pregnant women to increase the trends of antenatal care during pregnancy and improve the nutritional status of pregnant women.

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