

Improving the nutrition and physical activity habits of pregnant women: The emerging role of health identity.

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Commentary

Women who acquire too much weight during pregnancy are more likely to develop diseases and have children who are at danger. Interventions to enhance health behaviours are typically planned for a large group of pregnant women, and trial results reveal an average impact that does not account for individual differences. This study looked into the factors that influenced pregnant women's diet and physical activity, as well as the requirements of these women in terms of lifestyle support, in order to help build future interventions.

Women who took part in a prenatal trial of vitamin D supplementation and nurse support were invited to participate in an interview. Seventeen women were interviewed about their prenatal lifestyles, as well as the assistance they received and desired. Interview transcripts were categorised thematically and analysed to learn more about the factors that influenced these women's diets and levels of physical activity, as well as their engagement with services that could help them.

The health behaviours of a woman during pregnancy have long-term consequences for her personal health and the health of her kid. Obesity and excessive Gestational Weight Gain (GWG) have been associated in studies to negative pregnancy outcomes for the mother, including gestational diabetes, pre-eclampsia, and an increased risk of type 2 diabetes. These women's children are more likely to be overweight or obese as children, and to develop type 2 diabetes as adults. While there are no official GWG guidelines in the UK, nearly half of pregnant women gain weight that exceeds the US Institute of Medicine's recommendations.

Having a balanced diet and doing enough exercise during

pregnancy can help women gain weight within the recommended ranges, potentially lowering the risk of the above-mentioned complications. Diet and physical activity during pregnancy have been found to affect mother and baby outcomes in addition to GWG. Unbalanced diets that do not match a woman's nutritional needs during pregnancy have been linked to increased blood pressure in adult offspring as well as negative metabolic health markers. Similarly, staying physically active throughout pregnancy has been demonstrated to lessen the risk of gestational diabetes.

Despite the necessity of maintaining a healthy lifestyle during pregnancy, the majority of women fail to fulfil specified dietary or physical activity standards. In response to this challenge, several therapies have been created, however trial findings frequently demonstrate non-significant, minor, or short-term impacts. Such studies frequently indicate a wide range of participant engagement, which has an impact on participant outcomes. When compared to those who do not participate in the intervention, those who do may reap benefits such as lower GWG.

Pregnancy is a unique time in a woman's life when she may be more motivated to improve her diet and physical activity levels, as well as encounter new impediments to change. It is vital to understand not only the primary elements that influence women's lifestyles during pregnancy, but also why certain women may engage more than others with an intervention, in order to build a scalable intervention that may help women in adopting a healthy lifestyle throughout pregnancy. A qualitative study was conducted with recently pregnant women who had participated in a trial testing a behaviour change intervention in order to fill these information gaps.

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