Project Title | Healthy gestational weight gain: enablers and barriers
---|---
Supervisor | Professor Deborah Davis
Address | Centenary Hospital for Women and Children, Yamba Dv. Garran
Telephone | 0422224288
Email | Deborah.davis@act.gov.au

Outline of the project

Obesity is one of the most significant health issues of our time. Regardless of pre-pregnancy Body Mass Index (BMI), the amount of weight gained during pregnancy [gestational weight gain (GWG)] has the potential to impact the health and wellbeing of the childbearing woman and her baby in the short, medium and long term. Women who gain excessive weight in pregnancy are more likely to retain weight, progressing from normal weight to obese over their childbearing years. The Institute of Medicine (IOM) offers the most robust guidance, recommending specific GWG target ranges for women who are underweight, normal, overweight and obese according to defined BMI categories. Only 36% of Australian women have optimal GWG. Despite the risks of excessive GWG in Australia, almost half of all pregnant women are not aware of the recommended range for GWG during pregnancy. Interventions targeting GWG have focused on overweight and obese women, been resource intensive and have had variable success. This led us to develop the smartphone App “HealthyEating4Two” which aims to assist women to optimise GWG whatever their starting BMI. This project analyses interview data collected as part of the “Healthy Eating4Two” study and includes the preparation of a manuscript for publication.

Proposed research methods

This is part of a mixed methods study. This project draws on interview data already collected via semi-structured interviews conducted with women enrolled in an intervention study in the ACT examining the effect of a smartphone App on gestational weight gain. Seventeen women were interviewed in the postpartum period to understand the barriers and enablers for women in achieving a healthy weight gain in pregnancy. Ethics approval was provided by ACT Health HREC.

Qualitative data analysis will firstly follow a simple descriptive approach using NVIVO 12 software (QRS International). Qualitative descriptive analysis is a low inference analysis that uses an inductive approach to develop descriptive themes. All transcripts will be coded by first attaching a descriptive label to each meaning unit (a sentence or group of sentences conveying a message or concept relevant to the study). Descriptive labels will be examined and grouped with other labels conveying a similar idea to create descriptive themes.

Preferred study discipline being undertaken by the student

Midwifery
Potential benefits to the student and to the department

Along with experience in preparation of a manuscript for publication, the student will gain in-depth knowledge of the literature relating to women’s experiences of gestational weight gain as part of updating the literature review for this project. Analyses of these qualitative data will provide experience in coding and thematic analysis along with experience in the use of software such as NVivo.

This project will benefit maternity services by providing local qualitative data on barriers and enablers for healthy GWG for women, which may assist practitioners to better support women in the future.

Department within ACT Health Directorate / Canberra Health Services where the student will be based

SYNERGY: Nursing & Midwifery Research Centre
University of Canberra and ACT Health

Please submit form to preclinical.research@act.gov.au