Factors that influence pregnancy weight gain among adolescents: A mixed methods study using text messaging

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RESULTS

SURVEY DESIGN
- Total 8 surveys, sent weekly by text message
- Text questions were both structured and open-ended
- Questions addressed diet, exercise, body image, and health during pregnancy

SAMPLE
- Pregnant adolescents age 14-24
- Singleton pregnancies
- Access to a personal text-message enabled cell phone
- <32 weeks GA at time of enrollment

ANALYSIS
- Descriptive statistics on quantitative responses
- Qualitative analysis on open-ended responses using a grounded theory approach

BACKGROUND
- Excess weight gain during pregnancy is a strong risk factor for long-term obesity among mothers, especially adolescent mothers, and their infants1
- A significant gap exists in our understanding of adolescents’ perceptions of and knowledge about weight gain during pregnancy

PURPOSE
- To understand the knowledge, beliefs, and factors that influence weight gain among pregnant adolescents

METHODS

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of respondents (n=54)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>n (%)</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>n (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>16 (29.6)</td>
<td>Some high school</td>
<td>15 (27.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>28 (51.9)</td>
<td>High school graduate</td>
<td>23 (42.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>8 (14.8)</td>
<td>Some vocational/technical</td>
<td>1 (1.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>2 (3.8)</td>
<td>Vocational/technical graduate</td>
<td>4 (7.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Some college</td>
<td>11 (20.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>7 (13.0)</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>3 (5.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Hispanic</td>
<td>46 (85.2)</td>
<td>In a relationship</td>
<td>28 (51.9)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>1 (1.8)</td>
<td>Single, never married</td>
<td>20 (37.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2 (3.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>1 (1.9)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CONCLUSIONS
- Participants show insight into healthy lifestyle changes (healthy diet, rest, hydration, exercise, and decreased stress), however many adolescents report barriers to engaging in these healthy behaviors
- Many young women report frequently drinking sugar sweetened beverages, and may benefit from skills to cope with managing unhealthy cravings
- The most commonly reported negative body changes associated with pregnancy included fatigue, pain/discomfort, and weight gain
- The most common educational resources reported were medical providers and the internet
- The most common reasons for not exercising were a lack of energy and being too busy

IMPLICATIONS
- Pregnant adolescents face significant barriers to engaging in healthy behaviors during pregnancy, including limited knowledge and resources
- Adolescent-centered interventions that address both social and educational gaps, and focus on appropriate diet, exercise, and stress management may help to improve health outcomes among adolescent mothers and their infants

REFERENCES