

Physician and Patient's Perspective to Weight Gain in Pregnancy

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Introduction: Gaining weight outside of the Institute of Medicine guidelines puts a woman and her foetus at an increased risk. Currently, limited or incorrect information about weight management is being provided to women during antenatal care. Despite the global obesity epidemic, research shows that physicians do not perceive this to be an important issue. Women are not getting adequate advice about weight management in pregnancy.

Aims: To assess what Irish women want Regarding Weight Gain and the Management of Weight during Pregnancy.

To assess physician understanding and attitude to weight gain in pregnancy. To assess current weight management during the antenatal period.

Methods: This was a quantitative cross-sectional study. There were two aspects to the data collection. Patient data was collected by printed questionnaires in the Cork University Maternity Hospital antenatal clinic; 100 first bookers completed the questionnaire. Physician data was collected via SurveyMonkey. Physical questionnaires were also used to gather physician data.

Results: The majority of women (71%) want to be given a target weight to gain during pregnancy; 74% want to be told if they are inappropriately gaining weight. 91% want information about diet and exercise. 18% think discussing weight gain is sensitive and should be avoided. Some 87.5% of physicians believe that weight management is important; 31.3% advise patients about weight gain. 68.8% perceive discussing weight gain as a sensitive subject.

Conclusion: Women want discussions about weight gain to be an integral part of their antenatal care. Physicians think weight management is an important part of antenatal care however they do not discuss it with patients, mainly because they feel it is a sensitive issue. More advice needs to be given to women regarding weight gain in pregnancy to prevent excess weight gain. Physicians would benefit from further education in this area to ensure they can provide accurate and up to date advice to women.