

Title: Determinants of Gestational Weight Gain and Internet Usage Among Vermont WIC Participants

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Inappropriate gestational weight gain has been linked to a variety of negative health outcomes for both mother and infant, yet many women exceed the current Institute of Medicine's guidelines for gestational weight gain. This study aimed to identify determinants of gestational weight gain in participants of the WIC program and evaluate Internet usage in this population, in preparation for developing an online behavioral weight management program for pregnancy. English-speaking, pregnant women over the age of 18 (n=25) were recruited by WIC staff at three District Health Offices. After providing verbal consent, subjects filled out a written survey and were interviewed by the PI. Morning sickness, food cravings, limited access to food, and concern about their weight gain were the most commonly identified barriers to gaining the appropriate amount of weight during pregnancy. Nearly all women reported reliable access to the Internet (96%, n=24). Half (56%, n=14) were "Interested" or "Very Interested" in using an online health and nutrition program to learn about healthy weight gain during pregnancy. The online program should address reported barriers to appropriate gestational weight gain, as well as provide information about weight gain recommendations, low-cost recipe ideas and tips for exercising during pregnancy. Personalized tracking of gestational weight gain may enhance the effectiveness of a weight management program and should be included in the online program. Further study is needed to determine the efficacy of Internet-based interventions for appropriate gestational weight gain, as it may help to improve pregnancy outcomes in this population.