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Sociocultural and interpersonal influences on low-income, first-time pregnant Latinas' beliefs, attitudes and experiences with gestational weight gain: A qualitative study

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Latinos are the largest and fastest growing minority population group in the United States, and are at increased risk of Obesity. In addition, Latinas are at increased risk of entering pregnancy overweight and gaining excessive gestational weight. Excessive gestational weight gain (GWG) has short- and long-term adverse health outcomes for the woman and her child. Although culturally tailored interventions show promise towards reducing excessive GWG among Latinas, findings from current interventions have had mixed results, suggesting the need for further tailoring to meet the needs of this heterogeneous population group. Therefore, the purpose of the present study was to explore beliefs, attitudes and experiences of first-time pregnant low-income Latinas with GWG. Methods: The study employed qualitative research with in-depth, semi-structured interviews conducted with 23 first-time pregnant Latinas between 22 and 36 weeks of gestation. Interviews were conducted by trained bilingual staff, transcribed verbatim, and analyzed using content analysis. Results: Analysis revealed that sociocultural and interpersonal factors, including social support influence the beliefs, attitudes and experiences with GWG of the low-income, immigrant Latinas women who participated in this study. Study findings can be used to further tailor prenatal care practices and interventions aimed at altering modifiable risk factors associated with excessive GWG. Conclusions: Future interventions designed for low-income, immigrant pregnant Latina women that take into account sociocultural influences on women's beliefs and attitudes related to GWG, as well as the influence of social support networks on women's health behaviors during pregnancy will likely be more effective in preventing excessive GWG.

Biography

Ana Cristina Lindsay is an Associate Professor in the Department of Exercise and Health Sciences, College of Nursing and Health Sciences, University of Massachusetts Boston. Her program of research and scholarship focuses on understanding social contextual factors to improve health behaviors and reduce health disparities among multi-ethnic Latino (Hispanics and Brazilians) population groups in the U.S. and Latin America. Her research includes the application of mixed-method approaches to understanding family- and community-level influences on mothers' and children's health, with a special focus on understanding psychosocial and cultural determinants of lifestyle behaviors in pregnancy and early childhood (diet, physical activity, etc.) and risk of obesity among low-income, Latino immigrant women and children in the U.S. and Latin America.

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