

Prenatal provider counseling and excessive gestational weight gain: An analysis of data from Washington State Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System

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Background: Almost half of all pregnant women gain excessive weight during pregnancy, which is linked to a variety of poor pregnancy outcomes as well as post-partum weight retention and obesity. Prenatal weight counseling may help pregnant women achieve their recommended gestational weight. The objective of this study was to assess whether receipt of prenatal weight counseling is associated with a decreased risk of excess weight gain among pre-pregnant normal weight women.

Methods: We conducted a population-based case control study of normal weight women using the Washington State Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) data to assess the association prenatal weight counseling and excessive gestational weight gain. Women were eligible for participation in this study if they began pregnancy with a normal body mass index (BMI) of 18.5 to 24.9 kg/m², delivered a singleton live birth, and participated in PRAMS from 2004-2008. Cases were women who gained excessive and controls were those who gained adequate gestational weight according to 1990 Institute of Medicine Guidelines. We used Poisson regression to estimate the relative risk (RR) and 95% confidence interval (CI) for the association between prenatal weight counseling and excessive weight gain.

Results: Of the 2,157 women eligible for the study, 49.6% gained excessive weight and 83.9% reported that their provider discussed weight gain during pregnancy. Weight counseling was not associated with excess weight gain (RR 1.03, 95% CI: 0.88-1.20).

Conclusions: Prenatal counseling was not associated with a decreased risk of excessive gestational weight gain. Weight counseling alone may not be sufficient for prevention of excessive gestational weight gain. Further research should identify effective counseling methods and resources as well as other important maternal and community factors that contribute to healthy weight gain during pregnancy.

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