

Texas Obesity Research Center

Negative Body Image is related to Overeating among Overweight Pregnant Women

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: Overeating and pre-pregnancy obesity increase risks for complications during pregnancy. According to Social Cognitive Theory, individual and environmental factors influence health behaviors. This study's purpose was to determine whether social norms (environmental factor) and body image (individual factor) regarding pregnancy weight control were related to overeating behaviors among overweight/obese (OW/Ob) pregnant women. **Methods:** Baseline data from an ongoing prospective study to identify predictors of excess gestational weight gain were used in this study. Pregnant women are being recruited from an obstetric clinic to complete a questionnaire, and research assistants are obtaining gestational weight gain data from medical records. For this study, baseline survey data on overeating behaviors (EBPQ; Schlundt et al., 2007), social norms (Courneya & Friedenreich, 1999), and body image (Eating Disorder Examination-Questionnaire version 6; Fairburn et al., 2009) among OW/Ob women were assessed using linear regression. **Results:** Data for 164 OW/Ob pregnant women with an average age of 25 (5.8 SD) and BMI of 33 (7.1 SD) were used in this study. 31% (n=50) were Hispanic/Latina, 19% (n=29) White, and 63% (n=97) African American among others (n=29, 19%). 52% (n=84) had at least some college, 36% (n=59) had a high school degree and 12% (n=20) had no high school degree. Income was < \$25K for 71.5% (113) of the sample, \$25-\$50K for 34% (n=66), and >\$50K for 8% (n=12). The model was significant ($R^2=.067$, $p=.014$); body image was uniquely significantly related to overeating (std Beta=.225, $p=.005$); social norms were not ($p>.05$). **Conclusions:** Improving body image among OW/Ob pregnant women may reduce overeating behaviors during pregnancy; thereby reducing obesity-related risks to pregnancy.

KEY WORDS: Obesity, Pregnancy, Overeating, Body Image

