



Pregnancy Outcomes of Overweight and Normal Weight Women in a South African Outpatient Clinic

H. Salome Kruger

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ABSTRACT According to a national South African study 56.6% of women were overweight or obese. The aim of this study was to monitor pregnancy weight gain and maternal health during pregnancy, and to compare pregnancy outcomes of overweight and normal weight women in a South African antenatal clinic. Pregnant women on their first visit to the clinic, still within the first 28 weeks of pregnancy and with a singleton pregnancy were recruited for the study over a one-year period. Demographic information, dietary intakes, blood pressure, HIV-tests and haemoglobin levels of the participants were recorded. Each participant's weight, height, subscapular and triceps skinfold thickness and mid-upper arm circumference were measured by dieticians at each clinic visit. Pregnancy weight gain was categorized as optimal, insufficient or excessive weight gain according to the IOM guidelines. A regression analysis was used to estimate the mother's pre-pregnancy weight. At birth the infant's birth weight, length and head circumference were measured. Women tended to gain excessive weight, with only 17% of normal weight women gaining insufficient weight. No significant differences between dietary intakes and birth data for women according to their pre-pregnancy BMI categories were found. The mean systolic and diastolic blood pressure of the overweight/obese women were significantly higher at the first and second visits than those of normal and underweight women. Women who gained excessive weight had a significantly higher pre-pregnancy BMI than women in the other two groups. Systolic blood pressure at the third visit was significantly higher in women who gained excessive weight.

Author's Address : **H. Salome Kruger**, School of Physiology, Nutrition and Consumer Science, North West University, Potchefstroom 2520, South Africa
Fax: +27-18-299-2464; E-mail: vgehsk@puk.ac.za