

Mothers' Perceptions of a Gestational Diabetes Risk Reduction Program for American Indian/Alaska Native (AIAN) Girls

American Indian/Alaska Native (AIAN) women have a higher risk for gestational diabetes (GDM) and subsequent diagnosis of type 2 diabetes (T2D). We conducted 1 focus group (n=2) and 3 individual interviews with AIAN women with a history of GDM or current T2D to culturally tailor and adapt a previously validated, evidence-based preconception counseling (PC) education program for teens with T2D to serve the needs of AIAN girls at risk of GDM and unplanned pregnancy. A semi-structured interview guide and several video clips/booklet excerpts from the original PC program elicited discussion. The interviews were recorded, transcribed verbatim, and analyzed by researchers using inductive coding with constant comparison method. We identified four primary themes: 1) Knowledge: Participants didn't know: what GDM was prior to diagnosis, about GDM risk reduction through nutrition and physical activity, the purpose of the 'sugar test' while they were pregnant, or the importance of losing weight after pregnancy to prevent T2D. They speculate most females don't know about GDM. They prefer family-based GDM education with focus on healthy nutrition. 2) Culture: Important to include: Native faces/images/stories, mind-body- spirit connection, traditional values of sacredness of fertility, moon time, cycle of life, and traditional foods. 3) Communication: Emphasize open communication with daughters regarding reproductive health, nutrition, respecting bodies, sexual activity. 4) Emotional Impact: Shared their diagnosis stories, feelings after diagnosis, and psychological impact GDM had on their lives. They used "fear," "shame," and "powerless" to describe fatalistic negative emotions from their GDM experience. In conclusion, participants suggested empowerment, support, and early education to mitigate this emotional impact. Findings from these interviews will be used to inform the iterative development of our GDM risk reduction and PC program for AIAN girls.

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