

Importance of cultural-socio-economic context in adapting an evidence-based gestational diabetes risk reduction intervention for American Indian/Alaska Native teens

American Indian/Alaska Native (AIAN) teen girls are at higher risk for gestational diabetes (GDM), type 2 diabetes, and complications. We collected qualitative data using focus group and individual interview methods with health care professionals and experts (n=16) in AIAN health. Participants shared their perspectives in working with this population and recommendations for tailoring a validated evidence-based intervention (VEBI) originally designed to deliver preconception counseling and diabetes education to non-AIAN teens with diabetes. A semi-structured discussion guide elicited responses about providing care for AIAN girls at risk for GDM, experience with successful programs for AIAN teens, comfort of mother/daughter dyads in talking about diabetes and reproductive health and reactions to video clips and booklet selections from the VEBI. Interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim, and data analysis included inductive coding and identification of emergent themes. Providers felt teens and their moms would be comfortable talking about the project's topics and that teens who did not feel comfortable talking to their mom would likely rely on an aunt, grandmother, or older AIAN female community member. Participants made suggestions to use Native faces and images/motifs, to include education with a community focus, and to avoid directive language. Participants expressed concerns about social/economic issues that affect AIAN people such as food and housing insecurity and sexual abuse/trauma which may impact both a provider/educator's ability to effectively advise AIAN teen girls about reproductive health, nutrition, and healthy pregnancies and for AIAN girls to engage in GDM risk reduction behaviors such as healthful eating. In conclusion, perspectives from these participants have been used to guide the development of a culturally tailored GDM risk reduction program for AIAN girls.

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