

Title: Obesity and Gestational Diabetes among African-American and Latino Women: Implications for Disparities in Women's Health.

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Abstract

The prevalence of obesity and type 2 diabetes is increasing among African-American and Latino women of childbearing age in the United States. Obesity and gestational diabetes (GDM) are associated with adverse maternal and newborn outcomes, and with increased future risk of type 2 diabetes for mother and child. Early detection and follow-up care may assist in reducing these risks. Descriptive statistics, Chi-square tests, analysis of variance and logistic regression analyses were used to describe the prevalence of obesity, excessive pregnancy weight gain and GDM; and to assess factors associated with GDM risk in a cohort of 552 African-American and 653 Latino women in a large Detroit health system. Women ranged in age from 14 to 47 years, spanning the childbearing age spectrum. Almost 47% of African-American and 37% of Latino women were overweight or obese; and 53% of African-American and 38% of Latino women gained excessive weight during pregnancy. The prevalence of GDM was 5.4% among Latino and 3.9% among African-American women. After adjusting for other risk factors, Latinas were 2.5 times more likely than African-Americans to develop GDM. Other independent risk factors were family history of diabetes, age, BMI, and, gestational weight gain before 28 weeks. Since most women have repeated contact with the health care system during and immediately after pregnancy, care providers have unique opportunities to identify and assist those who are at risk for obesity and diabetes.