TOWARDS AN UNDERSTANDING OF PREGNANCY WEIGHT GAIN IN AFRICAN-AMERICAN WOMEN

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Problem

- Excessive gestational weight gain
- African-American women in particular
Theoretical Base

- A common construct across multiple behavior change theories, including social cognitive theory, is that behavior change is impacted by personal factors including risk appraisal and motivation to change.
Purpose

- Formative work to determine the perspective of pregnant African-American women on weight gain in pregnancy
Background

Excessive gestational weight gain contributes to long-term obesity

Women at increased risk
Background

Attitudes

Beliefs

Dissatisfaction
Methods

- Focus groups

Participants
- 26 African-American women
Methods

Procedures

recruitment

Focus group strategies

moderator

group guide

audiotape

fieldnotes
Methods

Interview guide development

Content Analysis
identify themes
Sample Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>N (%)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age ranges</td>
<td></td>
<td>Completed education</td>
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<td>18-20</td>
<td>9 (35%)</td>
<td>Grade 8</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
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<td>21-29</td>
<td>13 (50%)</td>
<td>Grade 9-11</td>
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<td>Grade 12</td>
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<td>Grade 12+</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>College</td>
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<tr>
<td>Race</td>
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<td>Health insurance</td>
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<td>Black</td>
<td>24 (92%)</td>
<td>Medicaid</td>
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<td>Multiracial (including Black)</td>
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<td>Medicaid options</td>
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<td>Commercial insurance</td>
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<td>Ethnic group</td>
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<td>BMI (self-report)</td>
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<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
<td>Underweight</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
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<td>Non-Hispanic</td>
<td>23 (88%)</td>
<td>Normal weight</td>
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<td>Overweight</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Obese</td>
<td>4 (15%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gestation of pregnancy</td>
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<td>9 (35%)</td>
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<td>10-20 weeks</td>
<td>16 (61%)</td>
<td>Weight range (pounds)</td>
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<td>21-30 weeks</td>
<td>8 (31%)</td>
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<td>31-40 weeks</td>
<td>2 (8%)</td>
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4 themes
Weight gain: No matter how much means a healthy baby

- “...I’m going to eat normal and I’m going to stay healthy and make sure my baby is healthy...”

- “...I’m like whatever, I’m not trying to watch now much weight I gain or lose while I am pregnant—I just pray that my baby is healthy”
Reluctant acceptance: It happens

“...outside of being pregnant, I don’t think we view being, um, a little thicker as being a bad thing. You know voluptuous is, in our culture, its more attractive in some ways. Not saying that ‘tis good or bad, but you, know, the difference.”

“but you don’t have any control you know, really, you know over how much you gain. I mean, you can watch what you eat but you have a whole baby inside of you, you have your placenta, and your fluids, you know.”
There is a limit: Weight gain impact on appearance

- “I don’t want all that extra flab and stuff...I can’t be like this! You know I don’t want to be the one that’s got to keep wearing sports bras and busting out of the sides and stuff like I got to double up.”

- “I mean I, my thing that messes with me is that I’m too short to be fat and everybody have their own opinion but 5 ft, 5 ft 1 inch, I don’t want to have so much weight until I need someone wheeling me around or I can’t you know do my usual things.”
Watching and waiting: Plans for controlling weight

- “I fear that—I’m not going to wait like I had done before, so that’s why I’m really trying to watch what I eat, so...that’s my fear so after the baby is born—I don’t want this baby weight on me, you know. I want to exercise so that’s my fear about weight gain during pregnancy.”

- “…if you nurse your baby it helps to lose weight faster so I was thinking about breastfeeding like losing the weight at the same time.”
Weight gain during pregnancy is...

Body size...there is a limit

Assumptions

Limit or control ??
Conclusions/Implications

Women are invested

Potential barrier

Opportunity

Health risks

Limitations