

# 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

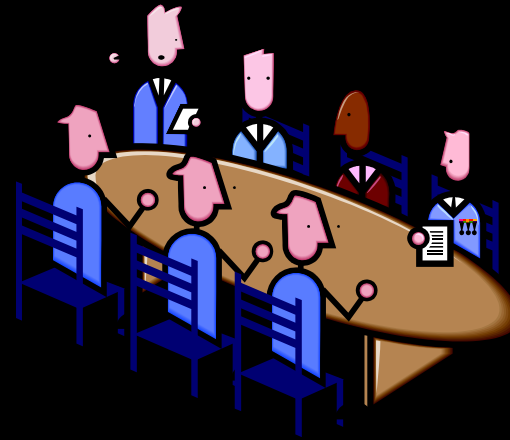
## Beliefs

## 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

Characteristics	N (%)	Characteristics	N (%)
<b>Age ranges</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 18-20</li> <li>• 21-29</li> <li>• 30-39</li> </ul>	9 (35%) 13 (50%) 4 (15%)	<b>Completed education</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grade 8</li> <li>• Grade 9-11</li> <li>• Grade 12</li> <li>• Grade 12+</li> <li>• GED</li> <li>• College</li> </ul>	1 (4%) 8 (31%) 12 (46%) 1 (4%) 2 (7.5%) 2 (7.5%)
<b>Race</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Black</li> <li>• Multiracial (including Black)</li> </ul>	24 (92%) 2 (8%)	<b>Health insurance</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medicaid</li> <li>• Medicaid options</li> <li>• Commercial insurance</li> </ul>	15 (58%) 10 (38%) 1 (4%)
<b>Ethnic group</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hispanic</li> <li>• Non-Hispanic</li> <li>• Unknown</li> </ul>	1 (4%) 23 (88%) 1 (8%)	<b>BMI (self-report)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Underweight</li> <li>• Normal weight</li> <li>• Overweight</li> <li>• Obese</li> <li>• Unknown</li> </ul>	1 (3%) 5 (19%) 7 (27%) 4 (15%) 9 (35%)
<b>Gestation of pregnancy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10-20 weeks</li> <li>• 21-30 weeks</li> <li>• 31-40 weeks</li> </ul>	16 (61%) 8 (31%) 2 (8%)	<b>Weight range (pounds)</b>	116-230



# 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.”





# Conclusions/Implications

Weight gain during pregnancy is...

Body size...there is a limit

Assumptions

Limit or control ??



# Conclusions/Implications

Women are invested

Potential barrier

Opportunity

Limitations

Health risks

