

WEIGHT GAIN DURING PREGNANCY; HOW MUCH IS ENOUGH?

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Adequate weight gain during pregnancy is important to ensure better neonatal and maternal outcomes. During last few decades, recommendations for weight gain in pregnancy have been highly controversial. Aim of this study was to describe the pattern and adequacy of Gestational Weight Gain (GWG) based on the current guideline used by the Ministry of Health, Sri Lanka, among mothers who delivered babies with normal weight at term, in the Kegalle District. This is a retrospective study conducted in all the Medical Officer of Health areas in Kegalle district and included mothers who delivered their babies during the period 01st of June to 30th June 2013. Data on age, parity, height, weight, birth weight of the newborn were extracted from the mothers' card B portions kept with the area Public Health Midwives. Mothers between 18 to 49 years of age, without any chronic medical condition or pregnancy complications and whose weights were measured before 12 weeks of gestation and after completion of 37 weeks, were included in the study. Mothers who had babies with birth weight less than 2.5 kg and more than 4.0 kg were excluded to focus the study to favorable neonatal outcomes in terms of the birth weight. Adequacy of GWG assessment was done according to the GWG guidelines given by the Ministry of Health Sri Lanka (MOHSL). A total of 392 pregnancy records were analysed, which full filed the eligibility criteria. Mean age of the mothers was 28.18 (SD-5.06) years. Majority (58.2%) of the women had normal pre pregnancy BMI. Only 28% of women reached the MOHSL recommendation on gestational weight gain. The overall gestational weight gain mean was 9.64 (SD-3.82) and highest average GWG was noted among mothers with normal pre-pregnancy BMI. Among underweight mothers, 85.4% did not achieve recommended GWG. Excess weight gain exceeding the recommended weight was evident among overweight and obese women, 25.5% and 53.8%, respectively. Our study shows that in spite of frequent antenatal care, majority of mothers did not achieve recommended gestational weight gain in Kegalle District. We conclude that interventions to provide proper nutrition care during pregnancy needs to be strengthened and on the other hand, there is a need to see the contextual relevance of these recommendations in our own population.