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Perception of Health Care Workers Regarding Postpartum Physical Activities of Mothers with a History of GDM: A Community Based Qualitative Study

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Background: GDM is a leading cause for T2DM. Physical activity modification is a major intervention to attenuate progression to diabetes. Nurses and midwives, the closest healthcare workers of mothers are the motivators and counselors during pregnancy and postpartum period.

Objectives: To explore the perceptions of healthcare workers regarding factors that affect the postpartum physical activity modifications of mothers with a history of GDM.

Methods: A descriptive qualitative methodology was used for data collection. Field midwives and postnatal nurses three each from three districts were invited for this study. In depth interviews were conducted using semi structured interview guides until saturation point was achieved. Thematic analysis was conducted to analyze the data. Ethical approval was obtained from the Ethics Review Committee, University of Sri Jayewadenepura.

Results: The following themes were identified in the thematic analysis; health believes (n=6), traditional and cultural believes (n=6), social influence (n=5) lack of awareness of mother and family members (n=5), lack of influence from health care workers (n=5) and lack of motivation (n=5). In addition to these major themes, lack of time and child demands emerged as minor themes. Non-optimal awareness of health care workers was found out as a major drawback for exercise interventions of postpartum mothers

Conclusion: Health believes, traditional and cultural limitations, knowledge gaps and family believes should be addressed to achieve optimal benefits of physical activity modifications during postpartum period among mothers with a history of GDM. Awareness of healthcare workers should be increased to achieve expected results.