

Physical Activity Patterns at Six Weeks Postpartum Among Sri Lankan Women with a History of Gestational Diabetes Mellitus (GDM)

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Background: Physical activity (PA) during postpartum period carries more benefits than pharmacological interventions prevent progression of GDM to DM. Evaluation of baseline PA facilitates planning appropriate interventions.

Objectives: To determine the baseline PA pattern and its associations at 6 weeks postpartum among Sri Lankan women with a history of GDM.

Methods: This cross sectional component, which is a part of a prospective study was conducted in three districts of Sri Lanka. Pre-tested short version of International Physical Activity Questionnaire (IPAQ) was administered to GDM mothers (n=100) at six weeks postpartum. PA was assessed by IPAQ scoring protocol. Associations and correlations were assessed by Chi square and Pearson correlation tests respectively by SPSS. Ethical approval was obtained from Ethics Review Committee, University of Sri Jayewardenepura.

Results: Mean age(±SD) was 33.6(±5.8) years. 52% were para 2 and 35% were primiparous. The mean(±SD) BMI was 25.99(±4.67) kg/m². The mean(±SD) weekly total minutes of PA was 6364.3(±6861.4). Of the sample, 53.0%, 20.0% and 27.0% were in health enhancing physical activity (HEPA), minimally active and inactive groups respectively. Walking was the commonest PA in HEPA group. Significant associations and positive correlations were seen between PA and, parity (r=0.204;p=0.042) and number of dependents (r=0.222 ;p=0.026). However, education, employment status, family history of diabetes and BMI did not show any significant associations with PA.

Conclusion: About half of the sample was highly physically active. Only one fourth were minimally active. Walking is the most popular mode of PA. PA increased with increasing numbers of dependents.