

CRE HiPP BITE

Brokering Innovation Through Evidence

A bite-sized summary of a piece of research in postpartum health, led by CRE HiPP researchers Maureen Makama and Siew Lim



Describing the barriers and facilitators to a healthy lifestyle in the first two years postpartum from the perspective of women and healthcare providers

Healthy lifestyle postpartum – why is it important?

BACKGROUND

- Women of reproductive age are particularly at an increased risk of obesity due to pregnancy-related weight gain.
- Maternal obesity has adverse consequences for both mother and child including increased risk of cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, adverse pregnancy outcomes and obesity in later life.
- Healthy diet and exercise are vital for the promotion of optimal maternal health but are disturbingly suboptimal in postpartum women.
- Postpartum women are faced with competing priorities and time constraints that makes it difficult to engage in health promoting activities.
- Healthcare providers' support has been identified as an important factor for behaviour change in postpartum women.
- This systematic review synthesised evidence on barriers and facilitators to engaging in a healthy lifestyle during the first 2 years postpartum from the perspective of women and healthcare providers.

Barriers and Facilitators by Capability, Opportunity and Motivation

FINDINGS

- We included 28 qualitative and quantitative studies

For postpartum women, we identified barriers and facilitators relating to

- Capability – lack of knowledge regarding benefits of lifestyle behaviours
- Opportunity – social support from partners, family, friends and healthcare providers; childcare needs
- Motivation – identifying benefits of exercise and perception of health; enjoyment of the activity or food

For healthcare providers, we identified barriers and facilitators relating to

- Capability – limitations in healthcare providers' skills in providing lifestyle support
- Opportunity – Insufficient time to provide lifestyle support
- Motivation – Feeling equipped to support postpartum women

We suggested intervention components to include in lifestyle interventions for postpartum women based on the identified themes. Our findings provide evidence to inform the development of interventions to support postpartum women in adopting and maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

Makama M, Awoke MA, Skouteris H, Moran LJ, Lim S. Barriers and facilitators to a healthy lifestyle in postpartum women: A systematic review of qualitative and quantitative studies in postpartum women and healthcare providers. *Obes Rev.* 2021 Apr;22(4):e13167. doi: 10.1111/obr.13167 Epub 2021 Jan 5. PMID: 33403746.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Interventions aimed at healthy lifestyles in postpartum women need to take into account the unique barriers and facilitators they experience during this life phase. Key components that should be included are practical strategies such as meal preparation ideas, promotion of enjoyment, creating supportive family environment and building the capacity of healthcare providers to provide postpartum lifestyle support.

What is CRE HiPP

The Centre of Research Excellence in Health in Preconception and Pregnancy (CRE HiPP) is an innovative, passionate, multi-disciplinary team of researchers, clinicians, students and consumers.

We aim to refine and implement health promotion, lifestyle improvement, and obesity prevention strategically targeting women preconception and during pregnancy, to improve the health of women and the next generation.

Find out more about CRE HiPP on our website hipp.org.au.

