

# CRE HiPP BITE

## Brokering Innovation Through Evidence

A bite-sized summary of a piece of research in pregnancy and postpartum health, presented by Dr Maureen Makama, CRE HiPP Early Career Researcher



Exploring levels of physical activity and sitting time in women with infants, toddlers and pre-schoolers, and associated sociodemographic and behavioural factors

## Activity levels in women with infants, toddlers and preschoolers

### BACKGROUND

- Physical activity is beneficial for the prevention of obesity and cardiometabolic health conditions and for the reduction of symptoms of postpartum depression.
- Prolonged sitting time contributes to an increased risk of chronic diseases and mortality.
- The decline in physical activity in some women during pregnancy extends into the years following childbirth.
- Understanding how activity levels may differ in women with young children can inform the tailoring of interventions to support them.
- This study explored the levels of physical activity and sitting time in women with infants, toddlers and preschoolers, and the associated sociodemographic and behavioural factors.

## Cross-sectional analysis of data from the Australian Longitudinal Study on Women's Health (ALSWH) – a population-based cohort study

### FINDINGS

- Women with infants, toddlers and preschoolers differ in their levels of physical activity and sitting time.
- Women were less likely to achieve recommended levels of physical activity in the first year after childbirth.
- Women were more likely to report higher sitting time in the first six months following childbirth.
- Women who met physical activity recommendations were (1) less likely to be older or pregnant, but (2) more likely to be unmarried/unpartnered and have good self-rated health, than women who did not meet these recommendations.
- Women who reported low sitting time were (1) less likely to be heavier, non-drinkers, have higher income, have a job, and be highly stressed, but (2) more likely to have more children and excellent self-rated health, than women who reported high sitting time.

Makama, M., Brown, W.J., Lim, S., Skouteris, H., Harrison, C.L., Joham, A.E., Mishra, G.D., Teede, H. and Moran, L.J., 2023. Levels of physical activity and sitting time in women with infants, toddlers and preschoolers: a population-based cross-sectional study. *Public Health*, 214, pp.1-9. [Doi: 10.1016/j.puhe.2022.10.016](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.puhe.2022.10.016).

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Activity levels in women differ based on the age of their youngest child. Women at increased risk of insufficient physical activity and prolonged sitting can be identified based on their sociodemographic and behavioural characteristics. This underpins the need for tailored and targeted interventions to adequately support women through this life stage.

### 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 at our website: [hipp.org.au](https://hipp.org.au).

This BITE was published on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2023.

