

CRE HiPP BITE

Brokering Innovation Through Evidence

A bite-sized summary of a piece of research in preconception and pregnancy health, presented by Pragya Kandel, PhD Candidate and HiPPP EMR-C Secretary



**Women's preconception physical activity behaviours:
Unpacking barriers and enabler to facilitate behaviour
change**

Barriers and Enablers Related to Preconception Physical Activity: Insights from Women of Reproductive Age

BACKGROUND

- The preconception period has implications throughout the life-course on the health of both women and children.
- Preconception physical activity has been associated with a range of benefits such as improved cardiovascular fitness, reduced risk of developing gestational diabetes mellitus and preeclampsia, and weight management.
- Despite potential benefits, preconception physical activity behavior is frequently suboptimal among reproductive-age women. Women do not significantly improve physical activity behaviors before pregnancy.
- We investigated barriers and enablers related to preconception physical activity in women of reproductive age.

We conducted a sequential explanatory mixed method study.

FINDINGS

- 788 non-pregnant women (aged 18-45 years) completed a quantitative survey and 13 women participated in a qualitative interview.
- Participation in physical activity was associated with having social support, a desire to improve body image, and to want to become a healthier person.
- Women encountered a range of barriers including misconceptions about physical activity, competing priorities, cost considerations and a lack of accessibility to infrastructure for engaging in physical activity.
- Enablers for participation in physical activity included knowledge of its importance, a desire to be healthier, weight loss, social support, and goal setting.

This research is yet to submitted for publication.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Researchers, clinicians and policymakers must tailor interventions to women's unique circumstances, accounting for distinct contexts, challenges, and motivations. Recognizing the array of barriers and enablers to behavior change may enhance the effectiveness of preconception physical activity programs.

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.

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