

Perception of musculoskeletal health and knowledge about physical activity among pregnant women with low income and low educational level.

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Abstract

Background: Urinary incontinence (UI) and lumbopelvic pain (LPP) are prevalent musculoskeletal problems during pregnancy, yet few women consult for treatment. Additionally women report low levels of physical activity (PA) neglecting their musculoskeletal health. In Chile, the vulnerable population has limited information about musculoskeletal health.

Purpose: To determine the perception of “normality” of the most common musculoskeletal disorders in pregnancy and knowledge about physical activity in a population of vulnerable women attending a primary health care center.

Methods: It was made a follow-up of a cohort group of 112 pregnant women in a primary health care center between years 2012–2014. It was made a follow-up of a cohort group of 112 pregnant women in a primary health care center between years 2012–2014. Pregnant women between 18 and 40 years old and coursing healthy pregnancy with one fetus, were eligible. The recruitment was made in the first pregnancy control, after the informed consent process was developed. They answered a survey which included questions about presence/absence of LPP and UI, perception of “normality” about LPP and UI, and their knowledge about recommended dosis of PA during pregnancy. Three measures were made to each subject, one in each trimester. Health information was extracted from the clinical record.

Results: From a total of 112 women with 3 performed measures, on average 81.5% of women considered “normal” the LPP, (72.1% 1st trimester, 81.7% in the 2nd and 90.7% in 3rd). The UI was considered “normal” on average 57.1%. The prevalence of LPP was 92% on average and for UI was 42,5%. The recommended dose for PA more reported was “30 minutes, 3 times per week”, the words more used to identify intensity were “moderate”, “medium” (50%), Other answers were “light”, “soft” and “I don’t know”. On average 70% of the studied population had overweight.

Conclusion(s): Almost all pregnant women considered “normal” for the presence of LPP during pregnancy and nearly half feel “normal” to have urine leakage during pregnancy. The perception of “normality” of both conditions was increased by the third trimester. Both conditions correspond to common pathological disorders in pregnancy, however, people confuse the term “common” to “normal”. LPP and UI were prevalent in this group. Women did not clear the recommended amount of physical activity during pregnancy and they were overweight.

Implications: This study identifies the need of planning effective education strategies for the population of pregnant women for the prevention and treatment of musculoskeletal disorders as a means of promoting self-care, mainly clarifying the difference between conditions that are “common” but not “normal”.

The physical therapist is the professional of health team who should educate to the population about musculoskeletal health issues and promote his clinical role.