Staying Healthy After Childbirth

A theory based survey of UK and USA HCPs views on the promotion of smoking cessation and interrelated cancer preventative behaviours postpartum

Introduction

Across the UK and USA, postpartum smoking relapse rates are high for women who quit smoking during pregnancy: up to 75% at 12 months\(^1\). Simultaneously, rates of exclusive breastfeeding and physical activity are low. These three cancer preventative behaviours have complex interactions, for example, smoking relapse often correlates with discontinuing breastfeeding\(^2\), and breastfeeding can be seen as a barrier to physical activity\(^3\).

Study aim: Underpinned by the social ecological theoretical framework (Figure 1), Project HATCH aims to assess interrelated factors impacting continued smoking abstinence and increased rates of breastfeeding and physical activity among postpartum women.

Methodology

Project HATCH is a multimethod study including:

Phase 1: A scoping review of existing postpartum support resources, and systematic literature review of interventions.

Phase 2: A survey of healthcare professionals (HCPs)

Phase 3: Qualitative focus groups with postpartum women

Phase 4: Intervention development

Phase 2 of the study is presented here: An online survey of UK and USA health professionals to elicit their views on current practice relating to target behaviours (smoking relapse prevention, promotion of breastfeeding, physical activity), postpartum. We explore how health professionals rate the importance of these barriers and facilitators for each target behaviour and how the barriers and facilitators are related to each other across the three behaviours. In addition, data are presented on health professionals’ feedback about existing resources and ideas for future improvement.

Survey aim: Explore perceived facilitators and barriers of the cancer preventing target behaviours relating to each ecological subsystem of the social ecological framework (Figure 1).

Participants

Results: HCP’s importance ratings of socio ecological factors affecting the three target behaviours

| Factors Behaviourally Supporting Two or More Healthy Behaviours (%) | Smoking, Breastfeeding, Physical activity |
|---|---|---|
| Community \(\times\) | 54.54% | 20.83% |
| Organizational \(\times\) | 45.45% | 18.18% |
| Interpersonal \(\times\) | 45.45% | 18.18% |
| Individual \(\times\) | 45.45% | 18.18% |

Results: Existing resources identified by HCPs

- Textual support: websites, leaflets, and apps
- Telephone helpline support for breastfeeding and smoking
- Health. 2009 Dec
- LJ
- 17
- 3
- Information about combining behaviours e.g. how to fit in exercising when breastfeeding, what is safe
- 23
- 16.67%
- 8%
- 4
- Most important
- Angelos Kassianos
- 5
- Underpinned
- Realistic antenatal provision addressing emotional challenges of parenthood
- KR,
- HCP Suggestions for interventions simultaneously targeting
- Jamie Payton
- Normalisation of 3 target behaviours
- 16.67%
- Gynaecol
- Postnatal ‘health and wellbeing’ support groups covering range of health behaviours
- UK
- Early postpartum home visits
- 4
- 27%
- 4
- Textual support: websites, leaflets, and apps
- Pump loan and hire, smoking medication/NRT

Conclusion

Wellness and ability to engage in continued smoking abstinence, physical activity and breastfeeding in the postpartum period is affected by physical and sociocultural variables in the larger community environment. There is a need to support women across these interlinked cancer preventative behaviours, within their unique contexts, with potential to significantly impact both maternal and child long term health outcomes. The results of the survey will contribute to the wider aim of Project HATCH to develop a prototype intervention to target continued abstinence from smoking, alongside increased breastfeeding and physical activity among postpartum women.

References

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