

**VIEWPOINTS OF MOTHERS WITH GESTATIONAL DIABETES
MELLITUS REGARDING A POSTPARTUM LIFESTYLE
INTERVENTION TO ATTENUATE THE DEVELOPMENT OF TYPE 2
DIABETES MELLITUS: A QUALITATIVE STUDY**

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Gestational Diabetes Mellitus (GDM) is a challenging health issue. Women with a history of GDM have a high risk of developing Type 2 diabetes mellitus (T2DM), metabolic syndrome and recurrent GDM in their future life. Lifestyle interventions are known to attenuate the progression of GDM to T2DM and the feasibility of the programme is important to get maximum benefits. Women who have undergone a lifestyle intervention programme are considered the best to discuss the feasibility of a programme. Therefore, the aim of this study was to explore the views of mothers with GDM about a dietary and exercise intervention they have undergone during the postpartum period.

This qualitative phenomenological study was carried out in selected Medical Offices of Health areas in Gampaha, Colombo and Galle districts. Postpartum mothers with a history of GDM who have undergone a comprehensive, supervised life style intervention program for one year were recruited for this study. Focus group discussions were carried out till the data saturation point was achieved. Framework analysis was used for analysis of data.

A total of 45 mothers participated in focus group discussions. Mean age \pm SD of the participants was 31.2 \pm 4.7 years. About half of the sample (58%) were educated up to GCE Ordinary Level (O/L). A majority (68%) of the participants' average monthly income ranged between 20,000.00 and 50,000.00 LKR. Sixteen sub themes emerged under the following four domains: (1) feelings and experiences about the lifestyle intervention programme for postpartum mothers with a history of GDM (2) facilitating factors (3) barriers for implementation (4) suggestions for improvement. The programme was viewed by the mothers as essential, costless and user friendly. Continuous follow up and positive extrinsic motivation were identified as major facilitators whereas negative influence from health care workers and social and environment constraints were identified as major barriers to the success of the programme. Enhancing awareness among health workers and general awareness of the public were suggested as measures for improving its acceptability.

This study concludes that women with a history of GDM need support and continuous follow-up in the postpartum period to assist them to develop self-

management, autonomy, inner motivation and prioritization skills to undergo lifestyle interventions with a view to reduce future complications.

Keywords: Gestational Diabetes, Mellitus, Diabetes Mellitus, view point, postpartum lifestyle, mothers

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