

P-546 - EXAMINING EATING PROBLEMS IN ABORIGINAL AND NONABORIGINAL PERINATAL WOMEN

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Perinatal women undergo changes in their weight and shape, eating problems such as dieting, binge eating, and vomiting/purging may be expected to further stress the pregnant woman or contribute to perinatal anxiety and depression. The limited reports of studies comparing Aboriginal and nonAboriginal women have shown little difference in eating disorders between the two groups.

Method: In a longitudinal study of depression and its correlates in socially high-risk, perinatal women, we also collected data about diet, binge and vomiting/purge behaviours. We were interested in understanding more about these eating problems and their association with perinatal health. Descriptive, bivariate and regression analyses were done.

Findings: Data were available on 283 women, 60% of whom were Aboriginal. The average age was 22.4 years and gestation was 15.4 weeks at onset of the study. Most women (84%) stated that they had no history of eating problems. Women who engaged in one eating problem behavior were significantly more likely to engage in another. NonAboriginal women were significantly more likely to report dieting, binging, or vomiting/purging ($p < 0.0001$). Overall, eating problems were associated with depression, mood swings, history of physical and sexual abuse, stress and recreational drug use. Women with eating problems were more likely to have gestational hypertension than those without, but confirming the literature, there were no other differences in pregnancy or birth outcomes.

Conclusion: NonAboriginal perinatal women experience significantly more eating problems, but Aboriginal women with a history of depression, abuse, stress and drug use are at increased risk for eating problems.