Abstract:

**Introduction:** Increased depressive symptoms during pregnancy have been associated with adverse pregnancy outcomes including preterm birth and low birth weight infants (Orr et al., 2007). Current research indicates that pregnant women with higher depression scores had poor eating habits (Fowles & Murphey, 2009). There is limited research on pregnant women who meet current United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) guidelines for fruit and vegetable intake and whether or not they report less depressive symptoms. The purpose of this descriptive study is to examine the relationship between prenatal depressive symptoms and adequate fruit and vegetable intake intake across the trimesters.

**Method(s):** Participants (n=89) were recruited for a larger prospective correlational study examining the relationship between psychosocial factors and inflammatory markers in serum, saliva, and cervicovaginal fluid throughout pregnancy. Participants completed a survey during each trimester of pregnancy. Psychosocial assessment included examining depressive symptoms
as measured by the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS). In addition, the survey included nutritional variables including daily fruit and vegetable intake. Data analysis included descriptive statistics, T-tests, Pearson correlation coefficient, and repeated ANOVA using SAS software.

**Results:** There was no significant difference in depression scores of individual participants across the trimesters. Highest depression scores were reported in the first trimester with nearly 34% of women scoring greater than 10 on the EPDS. As pregnancy progressed through each trimester, more women met the USDA fruit and vegetable requirement (74%; 85%; 87%, respectively). Across all three trimesters, participants who ate the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables were less likely to report depressive symptoms.

**Discussion & Conclusions:** All women should be screened for depression and adequate nutritional intake throughout pregnancy to decrease the risk of adverse birth outcomes. Nursing implications include educating the pregnant client about the importance of a well-balanced diet including adequate intake of fruits and vegetables. Other nursing implications include teaching pregnant clients the signs and symptoms of depression.

**Abstract History:**
This abstract has not been presented or accepted for presentation in whole or in part at the SNRS or other scientific meeting.

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