Preconception Reproductive Knowledge Promotion Program

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According to Finer and Kost (2011), about 49% of all pregnancies each year are unintended. That is a lot of pregnancies where women are not preparing ahead of time to set themselves up for a good pregnancy. The Preconception Reproductive Knowledge Promotion (PREKNOP) Program seeks to help low-income women recognize their pregnancies earlier, or so that they can prevent a pregnancy from occurring if they do not wish to be pregnant. The program does this by doing home visits with the women and teaching them about their body, reproductive health and general health concerns.

The research project consists of three phases. In the first phase we have women who are getting home visits monthly. We go into their homes and teach them all about their body, the anatomy, and the hormones related to the woman’s cycle. We teach the women how to keep track of their period and ovulation, so that they know when they are at risk for becoming pregnant if they are not on any form of birth control. We also have women in what we call Phase two. In phase two we have already given the women survey’s for each month at their last home visit from phase one, and we have the women send us in the survey’s each month so we can keep track of if they are putting themselves at risk for pregnancy or not. After six months of sending in surveys, we go back to the woman’s house and visit her again and see how she has been using the information that we taught her, this is phase three. We visit the women again twice more in the following year with the visits being six months apart. Because of different waves of recruitment my responsibility is doing home visits with women who are in all the different stages.

While I am in some of these homes I get to meet and get to know these women who all have different backgrounds and stories. It is really interesting to hear the unique stories of all the different women. Some of them are educated through college, others only high school and others did not even finish middle school. Some have regular jobs, some don’t. Some want more kids, others do not. With all the women being so different it is fun to look up different information that the women specifically want. One woman wanted more information on exercise, some want information on pork, others want information on meningitis or how to hide vegetables in food. It is wonderful to see the women getting engaged in the program and wanting to learn and know more.

Aside from home visits, I also helped out with data entry. We put all of our documentation and surveys into the computer so that different analyses can be run to see how much the women are learning. Another thing that I did was a literature review. We are looking into the prevalence of alcohol consumption around the time of conception. One thing that I really learned in this project is just how many women don’t know that they are pregnant right away. And that it is really important for them not to drink in those first few weeks of pregnancy, when they don’t necessarily know if they are pregnant or not. We have found that it is generally the low-income population that is more likely to drink during the pre-pregnancy recognition period, which means that it is really important that we teach our clients about not drinking alcohol during a time where they might be pregnant. So it will be interesting to see what else we find as we read more about the prevalence of women who drink while pregnant or in the period of time right before they get pregnant.
References: