

Title of Research Presentation: Opportunities for empowerment for a healthy diet quality during pregnancy

Background/Objectives

A healthy diet quality during pregnancy is important for maternal and child health. Midwives play an important role in supporting pregnant women to choose a healthy diet quality, but their advice is often presented in very general terms and primarily focused on food safety issues only. To empower pregnant women for a healthy diet quality, it is crucial to gain in-depth understanding of pregnant women's perspectives of food and eating, perspectives of midwives and dieticians and opportunities for empowerment. The aim was to develop an empowerment strategy for a healthy diet quality during pregnancy.

Methods

An iterative process was used to develop the strategy: literature study, questionnaires among pregnant women (n=52) and dieticians (n=124); in-depth interviews with pregnant women (n=27), midwives (n=20), dieticians (n=13); three focus groups with midwives (n=12), two with dieticians (n=17) and two with pregnant women (n=6); three pressure cooker sessions with various stakeholders (n=30) and individual and group discussions with professionals (n=12).

Results

Opportunities for empowerment were searching balanced and personalized information, developing strategies to implement healthy diets, navigating the social environment, and dealing with different motivations. These were included in the Power 4 a Healthy Pregnancy (P4HP) strategy, as well as issues – both practical and content related – raised by stakeholders. The P4HP strategy consists of three (extra) consultations with the midwife and one with the dietician to specifically discuss the pregnant women's diet and seek for opportunities for empowerment for a healthy diet quality.

Discussion

Pregnant women and other stakeholders hold diverse perspectives regarding food and eating, signalling the need for a flexible and tailored empowerment strategy. The P4HP strategy supports midwives and dieticians to optimize pregnant women's empowerment processes to make healthy modifications to their diet quality. The P4HP strategy will be implemented in the Netherlands and evaluated on processes and outcomes related to empowerment and diet quality.

Keywords

Empowerment, pregnancy, diet quality, midwives, dieticians

Preferred presentation format

Oral