

Nutrition and exercise recommendations for pregnant immigrants

Survey of requirements

Project 387

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Background

Approximately one third of the adult population and one fifth of all children in Switzerland are overweight. The Swiss population has been alerted to the problem of obesity and its relationship to diet and physical activity by numerous campaigns. However, the foreign population living in Switzerland was insufficiently approached by these campaigns.

Vision

In the context of the equality of opportunities, migrants get better access to recommendations concerning diet and physical activity.

Aim of the project „ERBEMIS“

To generate and to test information material for pregnant migrants and to perform a survey of special needs in this population.

Methods

We performed interviews with migrants living in the region of Zürich using the following methods: Focus- and Pretesting-Groups which encouraged discussions among the women. From the interviews and additional observations we learnt about the migrants' needs with respect to knowledge, support, and infrastructure. We tested the following pilot information material for its utility: food pyramid, plate model (composition of a healthy meal) und recommendations concerning physical activity. We summarised particularly important recommendations in a manual. A tool to obtain a diet history was developed but not tested yet.

Results

The most interesting information came from unexpected statements and observations, which did not correspond to the description in statistics: The women we spoke to were most often normal weight and did not consume fast food. Their knowledge about diet and physical activity during pregnancy is largely influenced by tradition but does not correspond to current knowledge. The women are grateful for information, and they are very interested in health topics.

Conclusions

In the education of migrants, it is a particular challenge to provide a clear, simple, and convincing message. A translation is most often required. The integration of cultural mediators may be helpful for both the informants and the immigrants. Competent intercultural staff improves the women's trust and compliance

Outlook

The information material for the information campaign PEBS will be further improved at the clinic of obstetrics of the university hospital Zürich (USZ). A collaboration with additional institutions is planned.

The information material will be presented to the society of gynaecology and obstetrics and maybe also at Migesplus. The project report will be available in the USZ database and in the SFEFS project data base, and it will be published in the Centre de documentation en santé publique (Saphirdoc).

Private comment / what would we do in a different way?

We would integrate key persons in the interviews at an earlier stage, and we would also include a professional intercultural mediator. We would include additional groups and also control groups into the study.

Summary Project ERBEMIS, 25.11.2008