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Assessing the experiences and knowledge of gestational diabetes mellitus among gestational diabetic mellitus patients who are post-delivery at Chris Hani Baragwanath Academic Hospital

Maphikana, Sakhuxolo

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ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION

The increasing prevalence of gestational diabetes mellitus (GDM) can be deemed as a concern for healthcare practitioners in South Africa, due to poor pregnancy outcomes, and the increased burden on the healthcare system. There are few studies that have investigated the knowledge and experiences of GDM among women in Africa, and in South Africa. This descriptive cross-sectional study aimed to evaluate the knowledge and experiences of GDM, among women with GDM post-delivery, at Chris Hani Baragwanath Academic Hospital (CHBAH).

METHOD:

After delivery at CHBAH, participants diagnosed with GDM responded to a questionnaire to assess their knowledge and their experiences of GDM.

RESULTS:

30 participants were recruited and the findings indicate that the majority of women surveyed had adequate knowledge about the risk factors, diagnosis and the maternal and foetal effects of GDM. Four themes were generated from the participants' experiences of GDM: negative emotions experienced by the women, the opportunity to improve lifestyle or health, concern for own and baby's health and adapting to the GDM diagnosis.

CONCLUSION:

The study provides insight into the knowledge and the experiences of GDM among South African women at CHBAH, who had a pregnancy that was complicated by GDM. Education levels were found to have an impact on knowledge assimilation and the role of health professionals in GDM management was emphasised. Despite some negative experiences of GDM diagnosis and management, healthcare workers contributed positively to the overall pregnancy experience. It has provided valuable information for improving management of GDM and opportunities for further local studies.