

IMPLEMENTING PRENATAL EDUCATION AND SUPPORT

Abstract

Background and Purpose: Preterm birth remains a major threat to maternal and infant mortality and morbidity. Women and infants at highest risk for poor healthcare outcomes are often marginalized, leading to under-utilization of prenatal health services, including prenatal education, resulting in maternal and child health disparities. The purpose of this Doctoral of Nursing Practice (DNP) project was to provide prenatal education to pregnant women in a support group setting to reduce modifiable risk factors associated with preterm birth through an evidenced-based educational intervention.

Methods: This project utilized a pre/post intervention design to provide supportive prenatal education to pregnant women through an online support group. The project setting was a perinatal counseling center for women seeking support for healthy pregnancy and postpartum in Western New York State. Voluntary pregnant participants used validated pre/post intervention surveys to self-report knowledge gained, program satisfaction, and gestational age at end of pregnancy. Descriptive statistical analyses were performed on the data obtained.

Results: A total of 50 participants were created using a Learning Data Set (LDS) due to inability to recruit voluntary participants. The pre- and post-survey completed based on the LDS demonstrated improved preterm birth knowledge and program satisfaction. There was no improvement in preterm birth rate among hypothetical participants compared to the regional rate.

Conclusions: Findings suggest that combining prenatal education with prenatal support may increase preterm birth knowledge in pregnant individuals to help them decrease modifiable risk factors to experience healthier full-term pregnancies.

Implications: Nursing professionals must continue to find innovative ways to present supportive prenatal education to pregnant women in order to decrease preterm birth rates nationwide.

Keywords: prenatal education, support group, preterm birth, pregnant women