

Media Release

Study shows exercise can control glucose levels in gestational diabetes

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Exercise may well be the answer for gestational diabetes mellitus (GDM), a condition that affects nearly 10 percent of all pregnancies.

A recent study from the Women and Infants Research Foundation (WIRF) and the University of Western Australia (UWA) Schools of Women's and Infants' Health, and Sport Science Exercise and Health, has found that regular exercise commenced upon diagnosis of GDM improves daily glucose control.

The study recruited 40 pregnant women diagnosed with GDM at King Edward Memorial Hospital (KEMH) and delivered an exercise bike to their home before returning for 30-45 minutes, three times a week, for supervised exercise training. Results, which have been published in the [Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise Journal](#), showed that the exercise program resulted in improved glucose management, fitness, attitudes and intentions toward exercise.

Study coordinator and WIRF researcher, Dr Rhiannon Halse, said "GDM can have serious consequences for both the mother and her child, including complications with delivery, and increased risk of developing obesity and diabetes in later life. The study results demonstrate that regular exercise can have beneficial results for women diagnosed with GDM during their pregnancy".

Dr Halse said "we still, however, need to understand if regular exercise can prevent gestational diabetes from occurring in the first place. Women with a history of gestational diabetes are five times more likely to develop type 2 diabetes in the future and put their children at risk of diabetes and metabolic diseases later in life".

A similar study currently being conducted by WIRF and UWA, The Cycle Study, is currently investigating whether the same exercise program can prevent GDM altogether in women who've had the condition in a previous pregnancy. Dr Halse said "women who were previously affected by GDM and who are currently planning to get pregnant, or are less than 14 weeks pregnant, can volunteer for The Cycle Study until August 2014".

To register for The Cycle Study, visit www.wirf.com.au/thecyclestudy or call the research midwives on (08) 9340 1705.

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