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Meeting Physical Activity Guidelines During Pregnancy and Its Relationship With Low Back/Pelvic Girdle Pain

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Low back pain and pelvic girdle pain (LBP/PGP) are common complaints during pregnancy, with more than 45% of pregnant women experiencing moderate to severe LBP/PGP. Exercise is a non-pharmacological treatment for reducing and preventing the development of pain in the adult population. **Purpose:** To determine if women who meet physical activity recommendations during pregnancy experience less LBP/PGP than women who do not meet the guidelines.

Methods: Pregnant women (n=24, 32.1±4.1 y, pre-pregnancy BMI=23.2 ± 6.0) in their third trimester (between 28-32 weeks gestation) who reported exercising >150 min/wk (n=10) or < 90 min/wk (n=13) were included in this study. Participants filled out a series of questionnaires assessing physical activity, pain, stress, and mood (anger, anxiety, depression, positive affect) and underwent a physical exam performed by a licensed physical therapist to determine the presence of LBP/PGP. Multivariate ANOVAs and nonparametric tests compared groups on outcome measures. **Results:** Thirty percent of women reported LBP and twenty-six percent reported PGP. Compared to women who were physically inactive, women who were physically active reported higher metabolic equivalent (MET) minutes per week (p<0.05) and less anger (p<0.10). There were no significant differences between groups on both subjective and clinical LBP/PGP measures. **Conclusion:** Although LBP/PGP was common in this sample and women who exercised exhibited greater weekly physical activity and less anger, there were no differences between groups on pain measures. Data collection for this study is ongoing.

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