

Title: Exploring Interpregnancy Interval: New Avenues for WIC and Periconceptual Health

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Background/Introduction: WIC has a long history of delivering the type of interventions outlined in national guidelines for optimizing periconceptual care. WIC aligns with these recommendations by screening for nutritional status, calculating BMI, discussing alcohol, tobacco, and drug use and promoting folic acid. Yet a review of health indicators for prenatal and postpartum WIC participants finds multiple areas for concern. In Oregon and nationally, more than half have a high pre-pregnancy BMI and similar number gain more weight than is ideal during pregnancy. More than one-quarter of postpartum women are anemic. In addition, twelve percent of WIC participants had a pregnancy less than six months after the birth of their last child and another 26% have another pregnancy in less than 18 months. Short interpregnancy interval (IPI) is associated with adverse health outcomes for mother and child. Exploring the role of IPI may provide the insights needed to strengthen WIC's role in periconceptual health care.

Project Goals: 1) Describe the risk factors for a short IPI and the impact of short IPI on maternal health indicators, 2) Gather qualitative data exploring women's perceptions about birth spacing, periconceptual health behaviors, and WIC's potential influence.

Methods: Data will be extracted from Oregon WIC and Birth Certificate data systems for all births in 2006-2010. Records will be linked and analyzed via survival analysis and Cox proportional hazard model. Additionally, sixty interviews will be conducted with WIC participants with IPI's of different lengths.

Results: Initial quantitative results available summer 2013.

Summary/Discussion: Understanding which subpopulations of WIC participants are at risk for short IPI as well as how women decide their ideal birth spacing will allow WIC to design tailored interventions to promote periconceptual health.

Oregon WIC is one of seven institutions to receive a WIC and Periconceptual Nutrition Research Grant through UCLA, with funding from USDA. Only Oregon is focusing specifically on interpregnancy interval.