

Latina Mothers Encouraged to Seek Postpartum Care

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Latina moms enrolled in an educational intervention program for postpartum care were more likely to seek follow-up care than those not enrolled in a program, according to a new study published in the *Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved* and reported by [Newswise](#).

Postpartum care plays an integral part in setting up healthy habits for both mother and child, according to study author Flavio Marsiglia, PhD, director of the Southwest Interdisciplinary Research Center at the School of Social Work at Arizona State University. However, research shows that women with low incomes, and particularly Latinas, have greater health risks because of a low average of postpartum visits to a health care provider.

The study, which relied on the Familias Sanas (Health Families) program, included 440 women in the Phoenix area. More than 80 percent of women were first-generation immigrants, and 73 percent had incomes of less than \$20,000. A majority of the women were of Mexican heritage, in their late-20s, and had a previous pregnancy.

During their first prenatal visit, women were invited to participate in the study if they were less than 34 weeks pregnant and identified as Hispanic or Latina. The participants then met with bicultural and bilingual prenatal partners between five and 20 times.

Researchers found that Latinas involved in the program were two and half times more likely to seek postpartum care than those not involved in the program.

“Educating patients and encouraging them to come back during visits near the termination of OB care are ways to increase the number of women who continue using health care between pregnancies,” Marsiglia said.

The period between pregnancies is a crucial time to cover issues such as vitamin intake, family planning and risks associated with pregnancy such as hypertension and diabetes. However, according to the Health Employer Data and Information Set, only 59 percent of women with Medicaid insurance receive health care after having a baby, compared with 80 percent of women with private insurance.

“Having patients come back for postpartum checkups is very important,” Marsiglia said. “It is

during this time that some health and mental problems, such as depression, may be recognized.”

Marsiglia recommended that public programs improve conditions and options for both doctors and patients. This, she said, would encourage more low-income Latina mothers to seek out health care.

For more info on Familias Sanas, click [here](#).

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