

Physical activity during the first trimester of pregnancy: an observational, cross-sectional study

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DOI: 10.36129/jog.2024.S163

Objective. Physical activity contributes to maternal and foetal well-being.

This study aims to describe the engagement in physical activity during first trimester of pregnancy.

Materials and Methods. An observational prospective cross-sectional study has been conducted in Naples, Southern Italy, between January 2022 and April 2024. PPAQ was administered to 498 pregnant women attending the first trimester screening between 11+3 and the 13+6 weeks of gestation.

Patients has been classified into two groups, “exercisers” and “not exercisers” (more or less than 150 minutes/week of moderate physical activity).

Results. Included patients spent 12 hours/week and 176.3 METs-h/week in any type of physical activity. Most of the time and METs have been spent in household/caregiving activities. Considering all the activities, 256 women (51.4%)

were classified as “exercisers”, while considering only sport activities, only 39 women (7.8%) were engaged in a moderate physical activity at least 150 minutes/week.

Stratifying by intensity, less minutes and METs-h/week have been spent by “not exercisers” in all types of activities, excepting vigorous ones, in whom no significant differences resulted between the two groups.

Conclusions. The rate of physical inactivity was very high among pregnant women in the first trimester and a very small percentage was regularly involved in sport/exercise activities. Participants reported to be mainly involved in household/caregiving activities.

Considering our results, specific programs should be warranted to improve maternal knowledge about the role of exercise in pregnancy and to implement women’s engagement in physical activity.