A CAUSAL MODEL OF THAI WOMEN'S PHYSICAL ACTIVITY DURING SECOND TRIMESTER OF PREGNANCY

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ABSTRACT

At present, various studies have confirmed that regular physical activity during pregnancy is beneficial for women’s physical and psychological health. However, it has also been found that most women significantly reduce their physical activity during pregnancy due to many barrier factors. The purpose of this cross-sectional descriptive study was to examine the relationships, based on the Theory of Planned Behavior’s constructs, among indirect and direct attitudes toward physical activity, indirect and direct subjective norms, indirect and direct perceived behavioral control, intention, and physical activity behavior during the second trimester of pregnancy. A path analysis was used to estimate the parameters of the hypothesized causal model. The sample of this study consisted of 272 pregnant women of Maharaj Nakorn Chiang Mai Hospital and the Health Promotion Hospital. Statistical analyses for descriptives and path analysis were conducted by using SPSS version 11.5 and LISREL 8.53 programs.

The results indicated that indirect attitude toward physical activity ($\beta = 0.13, p < .01$), indirect subjective norm ($\beta = 0.24, p < .001$) and indirect perceived behavioral control ($\beta = 0.18, p < .001$) had a significant positive indirect influences on intention via attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, respectively. Attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control had a significant positive direct influence on intention ($\beta = 0.14, p < .01; \beta = 0.26, p < .001; \beta = 0.20, p < .001$, respectively). Indirect subjective norms, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control each had a significant positive indirect influence on physical activity behavior via intention ($\beta = 0.03, p < .05; \beta = 0.04, p < .05; \beta = 0.03, p < .05$, respectively). Intention had a significant positive direct influence on physical activity behavior ($\beta = 0.14, p < .05$).

The findings partially supported the Theory of Planned Behavior by providing an empirical explanation of women’s physical activity behavior during the second trimester of pregnancy. These findings enhance a better understanding and add to the knowledge base of the Theory of Planned Behavior for developing appropriate intervention programs in the future.

KEY WORDS: PREGNANT WOMEN / PHYSICAL ACTIVITY / INTENTION / THEORY OF PLANNED BEHAVIOR’S CONSTRUCTS

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