Evening Snacking in Relation to Self-reported Declines in Sleep Quality during Pregnancy: Preliminary Results from the Decision-Making, Eating, and Weight Gain During Pregnancy (DEW) Study

Wendy McCallum
University of Massachusetts Medical School

Bradley M. Appelhans
Rush University Medical Center

Tiffany A. Moore Simas
University of Massachusetts Medical School

See next page for additional authors

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Presenter Information
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Comments
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Evening snacking in relation to self-reported declines in sleep quality during pregnancy: preliminary results from the Decision-Making, Eating, and Weight Gain during pregnancy (DEW) Study

Wendy McCallum, BA¹, Bradley M. Appelhans, PhD², Tiffany A. Moore Simas, MD MPH MEĐ³⁴⁵, Sherry R. Xiao, MPH¹, Shums Alikhan, BS¹, Isabelle C. Pierre-Louis, BS¹, Barbara C. Olendzki, RD MPH LDN⁶, Sherry L. Pagoto, PhD⁶, Molly E. Waring, PhD¹

¹ Division of Epidemiology of Chronic Diseases and Vulnerable Populations, Department of Quantitative Health Sciences, University of Massachusetts Medical School
² Department of Preventive Medicine, Rush University Medical Center, Chicago, IL
³ Division of Research, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology and Department of Pediatrics, University of Massachusetts Medical School
⁴ Department of Pediatrics, University of Massachusetts Medical School
⁵ Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, UMass Memorial Health Care
⁶ Division of Behavioral and Preventive Medicine, Department of Medicine, University of Massachusetts Medical School

Contact info: Molly E. Waring, PhD; Department of Quantitative Health Sciences, University of Massachusetts Medical School, 368 Plantation Street, AS8-1077, Worcester, MA, 01605; email molly.waring@umassmed.edu; phone (508) 856-3504

Background: Poor sleep in non-pregnant adults has been associated with increased evening snacking, which may contribute to weight gain. Sleep disturbances are common during pregnancy.

Objective: To examine the association between changes in sleep quality from pre-pregnancy and evening snacking.

Methods: In an ongoing prospective cohort study, pregnant women were recruited from UMMHC obstetric practices and the community. Participants are 18+ years, with singleton gestation <36 weeks, pre-pregnancy BMI 18.5-40 kg/m², English-speaking, and with plans to deliver at UMMHC. Participants were asked “compared to the three months before you became pregnant, how is your sleep quality now?”; we combined responses of “about the same”/“a little better”/“a lot better” versus “a little worse”/“much worse”. Participants completed three 24-hour dietary recalls (2 weekdays, 1 weekend day). Evening snacks were defined as eating occasions after dinner but before bedtime during which food items other than water was consumed. Fisher’s Exact tests and t-tests provided comparisons for evening snacking (yes/no), number of snacks, and energy intake.

Results: Women with complete data (n=55) were 58% non-Hispanic White and aged 30.0 (SD:4.3) years; gestational age at study visit was 23.0 (SD:5.9) weeks. Of 866 meals reported, 94 were evening snacks. 71% (n=39) reported that their current sleep quality was worse than before pregnancy. Evening snacks were reported by 90% of women reporting worse sleep and 69% same/better (p=0.1028). While the number of snacks among snackers did not differ by change in sleep quality (M[SD]: 2.2[1.2] versus 1.6[0.8], p=0.2372), energy intake from these snacks was higher among women whose sleep quality had declined (M[SD]: 630[488] versus 309[331] kcal, p=0.0480).

Conclusions: Declines in sleep quality during pregnancy may be linked to evening snacking. More research is needed to understand the role of sleep quality, eating behavior, and weight gain during pregnancy.