

## UNDERSTANDING POSTPARTUM SMOKING RESUMPTION: WOMEN'S REASONS FOR STOPPING SMOKING DURING PREGNANCY

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The vast majority of women who stop smoking during pregnancy resume postpartum. With effective relapse-prevention programs, we could substantially decrease women's return to smoking and prevent many tobacco-related chronic illnesses in women. The experiences of women who are self-initiated quitters provide valuable insights for relapse-prevention intervention improvement.

**Purpose:** The purpose of this study was to better understand women's smoking and cessation motivations and patterns through examination of the success stories of women who had stopped smoking during pregnancy.

**Methods:** A prospective longitudinal qualitative design was used to describe the experiences of pregnant women who were self-initiated quitters. The sample was 15 well, community-dwelling pregnant women. The mean age of participants was 24 years, 8 were African American, 4 Euro-American, 2 Latina, and 1 Native American. Six were primiparas and 9 were multiparas. Women's mean education was 12 years and mean monthly household income was \$1643. All participants smoked mentholated cigarettes prior to pregnancy. Participants were interviewed early in pregnancy, at 36 weeks of pregnancy, and at 3 months postpartum using a semi-structured interview guide. Questions included women's stories of smoking initiation, previous and current cessation experiences, thoughts of resuming smoking postpartum, pregnancy-related experiences such as nausea and vomiting, and smoking resumption experiences. Interviews were conducted in women's homes, tape-recorded, and transcribed verbatim. Narrative summaries were developed and a thematic content analysis of 43 interviews was conducted.

**Findings:** The data analyses revealed that the majority of women experienced an aversion to the taste or smell of tobacco smoke while pregnant and attributed these sensation changes to being pregnant. The taste and smell of tobacco smoke returned to pre-pregnancy states postpartum; and by 3 months postpartum, 73% of the women were smoking.

**Discussion:** The sensory findings are consistent with pregnant women's increased sensitivity to bitter tasting substances, can be conceptualized as a pregnancy-specific extrinsic source of motivation for smoking cessation, and can assist us in predicting early postpartum relapse. We will discuss our use of the findings to develop a risk assessment and intervention strategies for preventing smoking resumption in women after they give birth.