

Pregnant women's partners perspectives on second hand smoke exposure during pregnancy: A qualitative study

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Background: Secondhand smoke (SHS) exposure is a significant preventable cause of negative health effects during pregnancy. An important source of SHS exposure during pregnancy is due to the partners smoking.

Objectives: This study aimed to explore the beliefs of partners (who smoke) of pregnant women regarding SHS exposure.

Methods: Qualitative semi-structured interviews were conducted. Inclusion criteria were: Jewish men; age ≥ 18 years old; currently smoking at least one combustible cigarette a day; and living with their non-smoking pregnant partner. Participants were recruited through promoted social media advertisement. Interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed and analyzed according to a general thematic approach.

Results: A total of 21 interviews were conducted. Participants reported feeling a strong responsibility for their pregnant partners' comfort and her health, which influenced their smoking behavior. Despite this, it appeared that most participants had low levels of knowledge on the health consequences of SHS exposure, and what are effective strategies to reduce SHS exposure, with incorrect perceptions on what constitutes exposure. Participants emphasized that any changes to their smoking behavior, including smoking cessation, has to be their own decision.

Conclusion: Partners of pregnant women were motivated to reduce SHS exposure among their partner and fetus but were lacking in knowledge and skills to effectively achieve this. The concept of choice and autonomy were important for the participants. Findings from this study will inform the development of a culturally tailored and gender adapted behavioral intervention that aims to reduce SHS exposure during pregnancy.