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Research demonstrates a link between low maternal weight gain in pregnancy and small for gestational age (SGA) births. Babies who are SGA at birth have a higher risk for obesity in childhood. Approximately 20% of pregnant women are under-gain in pregnancy. Low gestational weight gain is recognized as a modifiable risk factor for SGA births, while it is also acknowledged that there is a multifactorial nature to maternal weight gain during pregnancy. Insights into pregnant women's perceptions of their low gestational weight gain experiences could assist health care professionals in working with pregnant women who are under-gaining. In qualitative studies, pregnant women or new mothers have downplayed or were not aware of the health implications of gaining outside of medical weight gain guidelines. From the viewpoint of pregnant women, qualitative data revealed that gestational weight gain was a neglected area of prenatal counseling by health care providers. Health care professionals ought to inform pregnant women about: the medical guidelines concerning recommended gestational weight gain ranges; and the health risks associated with gaining outside of the medical recommendations.

Cynthia Murray completed her BN and MN at Memorial University of Newfoundland, Canada and PhD in Nursing at University of Alberta in Edmonton, Canada. She is an Associate Professor at Memorial University of Newfoundland, School of Nursing. Her areas of research include "Weight and health during pregnancy and childhood".

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