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THE ROLE OF BELIEFS AND EXPECTANCIES IN ADOPTING HEALTH BEHAVIORS BY PREGNANT SMOKERS

J. Zycinska

Warsaw School of Social Psychology, Warszawa, Poland

Objective: The aim of the study was to explore the predictability of beliefs and expectancies concerning one's own health and the health of the infant in electing health behaviors by pregnant smokers.

Methods: The study comprised 442 women, mean age 28.33 (SD=4.54), in normal pregnancy. Among the subjects 10.4% were current smokers while 30.3% had quit the habit. The beliefs and expectancies were evaluated using own questionnaire. Health behaviors were assessed on the basis of the IZZ by Z. Juczyński, supplemented by specific pregnancy-related behaviors.

Results: Pregnant non-smokers adopted significantly more health behaviors in comparison with pregnant smokers. The multiple regression analysis revealed the highest effectiveness of the applied model among pregnant smokers (55% of the explained variance). Predictors of increased pregnancy-related health behaviors were: expectancies concerning delivery, internal health locus of control and self-efficacy associated with quitting smoking. Surprisingly, the socioeconomic status and educational attainment as well as the level of nicotine addiction did not influence these behaviors. The study verified discontinuity patterns of the TTM.

Conclusions: Programs intended for pregnant smokers should aim not only at cessation of smoking but also at improving life styles. The general transformation of cognitive variables related to this process is more important than the phases of health behavior change.