



## Background

- ❖ Postpartum weight retention can predict future weight gain and long-term obesity.
- ❖ Nearly half of mothers were overweight or obese before pregnancy in Los Angeles County. Previous research found that 14% - 20% of women tend to retain 11 lbs. or more of the weight gained during pregnancy, thus, having higher pre-pregnancy weight with each subsequent pregnancy. Factors associated with long-term postpartum weight retention have yet to be explored

## Objective

- ❖ Identify factors associated with weight retention two and half years after pregnancy.

## Methods

### Study Population

We studied 2,049 women who had a live birth in 2012 and responded to Los Angeles Mommy and Baby (LAMB) survey and the follow up survey (LAMB Follow UP) when the child was two years old. Those who had a subsequent pregnancy after the initial survey were also excluded.

### Definitions of Measures

The pre-pregnancy BMI was based on weight and height information from the birth records. Mother's weight at time of follow up, approximately 2.5 years postpartum, was based on self report, "How much do you weigh now".

**Maternal Weight Retention** is calculated as the difference between pre-pregnancy weight and weight at follow up, and categorized into two groups: (1) those who weigh less or the same and (2) those who weigh more than their pre-pregnancy weight.

## Statistical Analysis

- ❖ Chi-square tests were performed to identify differences in maternal weight retention.
- ❖ Statistical Analysis System Version 9.3 was used to perform the analysis.

## Results

Table 1. Percent of Mothers Returning to Pre-pregnancy Weight by Selected Maternal Characteristics

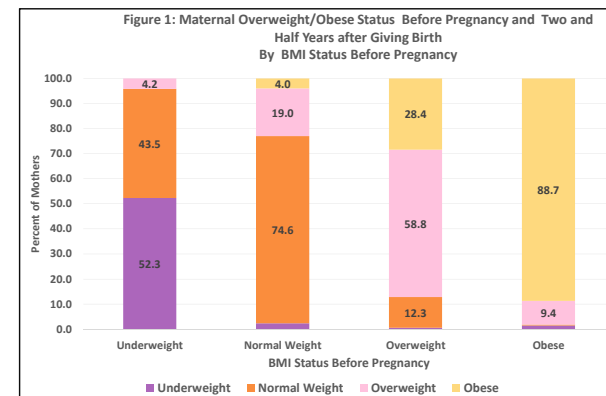
Selected Maternal Characteristics	Heavier Than Before
Race/ethnicity*	<b>65.7</b>
White	56.5
Hispanic	<b>69.6</b>
African American	61.8
Asian Pacific Islander	63.1
Native American/Other	61.0
Age at Delivery*	
Less than 20	<b>83.6</b>
20 to 29	68.2
30 to 34	64.1
35+	60.0
Highest Education Attainment*	
Less than 12 years	<b>72.0</b>
12 years	70.1
More than 12 years	62.8
Physical Activity During Last Month*	
Do not exercise	<b>74.0</b>
Less than 1 day per week	64.9
1 to 4 days per week	65.3
5 or more days per week	55.3
Mother's Perception of Her Weight*	
Underweight	44.1
Normal Weight	54.2
Overweight	<b>73.3</b>
Rating for availability places to buy fresh food at follow up	
Very poor, poor or neutral	68.7
Good or very good	64.1
Postpartum Depressive Mood	
Not at all or little depressed	65.2
Moderate or very depressed	70.1

\*p<0.05

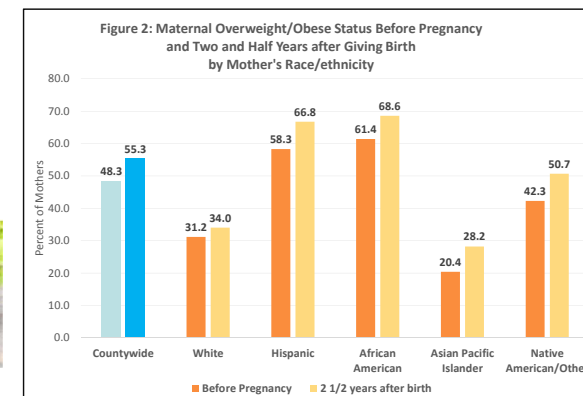


Mothers were least likely to return to their pre-pregnancy weight, if they:

- were Hispanic
- were teen mothers
- had less than 12 years of education
- did not exercised
- perceived themselves as overweight (Table 1)



- ❖ Almost one in five mothers (19%) in the normal weight category before pregnancy became overweight at Follow Up
- ❖ Over one in four mothers (28%) in the overweight category before pregnancy became obese at Follow Up (Figure 1).



- ❖ With the exception of White mothers, the prevalence of overweight/obesity increased at least 7% for mothers of all racial/ethnic groups. (Figure 2)

## Conclusion & Public Health Implications

- ❖ Special attention should be paid to those women who are overweight before pregnancy to prevent them from becoming obese 2 years postpartum.
- ❖ Significant numbers of women are retaining weight after a live birth and are at risk of becoming overweight/obese. Efforts to reduce overweight/obesity among women of reproductive age should consider focusing on women right after giving birth. Programs such as Choose Health LA MOMS should be promoted to help women return to their pre-pregnancy weight.
- ❖ Health messaging should include different strategies for teen mothers and be culturally sensitive and linguistically appropriate focusing on building positive body image and resources to promote psychosocial well-being.

