

*Monday, February 23, 1:30PM-3:00PM
Concurrent Breakout Session A*

The Scope of the Problem: Obesity Among Women of Childbearing Age

Moderator: Wendy Nembhard, University of South Florida, Tampa, FL

Patterns of Obesity among Women of Childbearing Age

Molly Lamb, National Center for Health Statistics, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta, GA

Over one third of U.S. women of childbearing age are now obese. Using data from national surveys that are representative of the U.S. population, this talk will provide a detailed look at the prevalence and trends of obesity in women of childbearing age by race/ethnicity, region, and socioeconomic factors. Limitations in the measurement of obesity will be briefly addressed. Dietary factors, physical activity, parity, childhood overweight, early life exposures and other risk factors for obesity will also be discussed.

Obesity as a Risk Factor for Birth Defects

Sonja Rasmussen, National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta, GA

A substantial increase in obesity prevalence among women of reproductive age has occurred in recent years. Maternal obesity has been associated with a number of adverse pregnancy and birth outcomes, including birth defects. Several studies have suggested that obese women are at increased risk of delivering an infant with a birth defect, particularly with a neural tube defect. Given the high prevalence of maternal obesity in the United States and other countries and the significant morbidity, mortality, and disability rates and the costs associated with birth defects, this issue is of considerable public health significance.

In this presentation, studies assessing the association between maternal obesity and several different birth defects will be discussed. In addition, possible mechanisms that might be responsible for the observed association between maternal obesity and birth defects will be discussed.