

‘Beyond the Bump’: development and evaluation of an online wellbeing and lifestyle pilot program during COVID-19 for first year postpartum mothers: a research article

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Abstract

Objective: To inform, develop and evaluate Beyond the Bump (BtB); an online program to improve access to education and support physical activity in the postpartum. Design, Setting and Population: Three-phase mixed-methods design before, during and following a 10-week Australia-wide online pilot program during COVID-19 with women in their first year postpartum and health professionals. Methods: Phase-one: needs assessment focus groups and interviews postpartum women and health professionals. Phase-two: program implementation pre-post health measures survey, attendance and engagement in BtB. Phase-three: program evaluation feedback surveys and interviews. Main Outcome Measures: Identify postpartum educational support needs, barriers and enablers of program attendance and physical activity. Mental health symptoms, wellbeing health behaviours and physical activity levels. Results: Women and health professionals expressed strong need for a postpartum program with access to expert education on exercise, pelvic floor, sleep and baby nutrition. Despite BtB being developed from women's suggestions (including time-of-day ‘morning’), attendance to all ten sessions was poor (23% (n = 162) participated in first session and 5% in the last session). Barriers to attendance included ‘too busy’, ‘forgot’ and ‘topic not relevant for age of child’. 88% of women reported education as the most enjoyable part of the program. 100% of women interviewed would recommend the program to a friend. Conclusions: There is a continuing need for postpartum support. Online programs with access to expert education and exercise were of significant interest and value. However, more research is needed to improve the uptake and value placed on mothers’ wellbeing and physical activity.

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