

Health Outcomes Associated with Post-Abortion Weight Gain among Female Students in Tertiary Institutions in South-South Nigeria

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Abstract: Several young ladies across South-South have having taking pregnancy that is planned but not desirable to gain weight in order to make them more beautiful and attractive without taking it into cognizance, the aftermath of such act. This weight gained from aborted pregnancy have given these ladies a lot of health issues. This study is aim to evaluate the Health Outcomes Associated with Post-Abortion Weight Gain Among Female Students in Tertiary Institutions in South-South Nigeria. This was a cross-sectional study involving 250 women. A well-structured questionnaire was administered to participants. The study lasted for a period of 3 months. Statistical analysis was done using SPSS version 25.0 and $p < 0.05$ was significant. The results revealed that 76% of the participants have health issues after planned abortion, 80% gained excessive weight, 68% had diabetes mellitus, 68% had hypertension, 72% have cardiovascular diseases, 85% had high cholesterol, 70% had liver issues, 55% had stroke, 80% had sleep apnoea, 74% had Shortness of breath, 70% had hormonal imbalance, 55% had reduced mobility and flexibility, 85% had irregular menstrual cycles and 80% had Poor quality of life. Majority of the participants experienced weight gain due to planned abortion and this becomes dangerous when it progresses into overweight or obesity. It affect nearly every organ system and increase the risk of chronic diseases, psychological problems, and reproductive complications.

Keywords: Health Outcomes, Associated, Post-Abortion, Weight Gain, Students.

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Research Paper

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INTRODUCTION

In recent time, weight gain is on the increase among young single ladies who actually want to build their bodies for social attractions men (Gbaranor, et al., 2025). There is an increase in the trend of terminating unwanted pregnancy among young female to gain weight, to look beautiful and sexy and to attracts their male counterpart without taking cognizance of the aftermath effects. Young female will just in pregnancy and later abort it to gain body maintenance. Pregnancy was supposed to be planned and desirable but recently, pregnancies are planned but not desirable because of the

special interest attached to it by celebrities' ladies who want to captures the attention of some men (Gbaranor, et al., 2025).

The path followed by women seeking abortion is most often long and lonely, corresponding to the increased suffering experienced in maternity wards, when they receive care tainted by prejudice and ill treatment (Schwandt, et al., 201; Kapp et al., 2013). In general, women in better socioeconomic conditions resort to safer procedures in private clinics; in contrast, poor women have more difficulty accessing the information and support provided by the public health

network, and they also have less bargaining power with their partners in their private lives (Santos *et al.*, 2016). The high rate of hospitalization associated with abortion is a reality when women are subjected unsanitary conditions. The magnitude of the condition is underestimated due to cultural, religious, and legal issues that hinder women from reporting unsafe abortions (Rocha, *et al.*, 2013). Access to information and contraceptive methods allows a woman to control her own body and make decisions about childbirth (Santos *et al.*, 2016).

Significant weight gain occurs in women during young adulthood which increases risk of diseases such as diabetes, CVD and many cancers. Life events affecting weight include pregnancy and motherhood, smoking cessation, marriage and cohabiting, attending university and possibly bereavement (Pegington, *et al.*, 2020). Weight gain is mediated by lack of knowledge and skills around food and nutrition, depression, anxiety, stress, satiety, neural responses, and possibly sleep patterns and premenstrual cravings (Pegington, *et al.*, 2020). Once weight is gained, it is difficult to lose and keep off (Pegington, *et al.*, 2020). National surveys from a range of countries report greater increases in weight in young women aged 18-35 years in recent years compared to those seen in older women. US data show that women aged 20-29 years have had the sharpest increase in BMI since the 1960s, with a rise of 4.6 kg/m² compared to 3.3 kg/m² for all women up to age 74 years combined

(Ogden, *et al.*, 2004). Pregnancy and motherhood have the greatest impact on weight, and the largest evidence base. Gestational weight gain (GWG) is often not lost postpartum thus contributing to the increase in weight seen in young women (Rong, *et al.*, 2015).

MATERIALS AND METHOD

This was a cross-sectional study involving 250 females who were within the age of 18 to 47 years. A well-structured questionnaire was administered to participants. Each participant had one questionnaire to fill appropriately and independently after instructions were given to them by the Research Assistants. Data collection took place over two months, from June to August, 2025. Statistical analysis was done using SPSS version 25.0 and $p < 0.05$ was significant.

RESULTS

The results revealed that most (76%) of the participants had health issues (Table 1), 68% had diabetes (Table 2), 68% had hypertension (Table 3), 72% had other cardiovascular disease (Table 4), 80% had overweight, 85% had high cholesterol, 70% had liver issues, 55% had stroke, 80% had sleep apnoea, 74% had Shortness of breath (Table 5), 70% had hormonal imbalance, 55% had reduced mobility and flexibility, and 85% had irregular menstrual cycles and 80% had Poor quality of life.

Table 1: Participant with health issues after post-abortion weight gain

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Participants who do not have health issue	60	24.00
Participants who have health issue	190	76.00
Total	250	100.0

Table 2: Diabetic

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Participants who are diabetic	170	68.00
Participants who are not diabetic	80	32.00
Total	250	100.0

Table 3: Hypertension

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Participants who are hypertensive	170	68.00
Participants who are not hypertensive	80	32.00
Total	250	100.0

Table 4: Other cardiovascular diseases

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Participants who have other cardiovascular diseases	180	72.00
Participants who do not have other cardiovascular diseases	70	28.00
Total	250	100.0

DISCUSSION

Health is an important component of life and it must be given full attention in order to maintain a

healthy living. Health should not be over look or compromise because no activity strives in absence of good health. However, due to certain manipulation and cosmetics, health of most people is compromised for

certain reasons. Abortion is one of the safest medical procedures when done with proper care. But of recent times, most women got pregnant and terminate it just to build their physical outlook.

The study revealed that majority (76%) of the participants had different health issues as a result of termination of a planned but not desirable pregnancy. This act has jeopardized the future of women which may or may not be corrected and if not corrected may lead to terminal illness or psychosocial trauma. Also, the research revealed that 68% of the participants had diabetics as a complication of post-abortion act. High blood sugar damages blood vessels and leads to stiffness and narrowing of arteries, raising blood pressure. Kidneys may be affected, which increases hypertension risk. This has really affected their lives and exposed them to higher stress and anxiety, depression, burnout managing a chronic illness and social stigma. The study shows that majority of the participants are hypertensive due to weight gain arising from termination of unwanted pregnancy. High blood pressure stresses organs (like kidneys) that help regulate glucose. It increases cardiovascular strain, worsening outcomes of diabetes. Most of the participants becomes overweight after termination of unwanted pregnancy and excess weight leads to insulin resistance. Pregnancy hormones increases insulin resistance, so extra weight compounds this. Also, there is a strong and interconnected relationship among hypertension, diabetes, and weight gain during pregnancy. These conditions often influence one another and can create a cycle of increased health risks for both the mother and the baby. Also, 72% had other cardiovascular disease and this may be due to excess weight gain due to pregnancy termination. This weight gain increases the workload on the heart and blood vessels, leading to elevated blood pressure, headaches, swelling, vision changes.

Also, most of the participants developed several health issues as a result of engaging in the termination of unwanted pregnancy. These health conditions developed by the participants include; high cholesterol, liver issues, stroke, sleep apnoea, Shortness of breath, hormonal imbalance, reduced mobility and flexibility, irregular menstrual cycles and Poor quality of life. There is a strong and well-established relationship between high cholesterol and overweight/obesity during pregnancy. Pregnancy naturally changes lipid levels, but when a woman enters pregnancy overweight or gains excessive weight, cholesterol levels can rise beyond normal pregnancy ranges and lead to health risks for both mother and baby. During Pregnancy, more body fat increases LDL and triglycerides. This fat tissue produces substances that increase LDL, increase triglycerides, decrease HDL. This leads to dyslipidemia (abnormal cholesterol levels).

CONCLUSION

Weight gain during pregnancy is a natural and necessary physiological process. When managed properly, it supports maternal health and optimal fetal development. Both excessive and insufficient weight gain can lead to complications, making regular antenatal care, balanced nutrition, and controlled lifestyle practices essential for positive pregnancy outcomes.

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