Text Messaging: An Effective Health Promotion Tool for Expectant and New Mothers?
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Background
Texas currently maintains a preterm birth rate of 13.1%, which is significantly higher than the 2020 goal of 9.6% (March of Dimes, 2011). The estimates of costs for health care of preterm infants “average about 10 times those for infants born full-term” (Jordan, Ray, P. Johnson, & Evans, 2011, p. 208). In 2005, the societal economic cost of preterm birth was at least $26.2 billion in the United States (Jordan, et al., 2011). The gravity of the decreased health and the associated costs prompts the need for creative strategies for health promotion.

Cellular phones cross all socioeconomic and geographic boundaries with the ability to reach both the masses and the individual on a very personal level (Kew, 2010). Despite the growing numbers of cell phone users estimated at more than 4 billion subscribers worldwide (Cole-Lewis & Kershaw, 2010), little research on the use of this direct link to people for health promotion is available.

Purpose
This descriptive study explores the text message delivery method for health promotion education to expectant and new mothers residing in Southeast Texas to answer the following questions:
1. Is text messaging a desirable delivery method for health education information by expectant and new mothers?
2. Does health literacy improve with the use of text messaging of health education topics and available resources?
3. Can text messaging of health education effect behavior change?

Design, Methods & Materials
The study was a quantitative, prospective, descriptive exploratory design utilizing a pre-test and post-test survey. A convenience sample of 33 expectant and new mothers residing in Southeast Texas was recruited.

Results
Preliminary data analysis indicates participant’s view text message interventions favorably; however, completion of data analysis and reporting of findings is anticipated by March 31, 2013.

Conclusions
It is hypothesized that text messaging as a means of delivering health education and information on health resources will increase health literacy of expectant and new mothers promoting healthy behaviors.
Bibliography:


