

The Impact of the Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program (CPNP) on Maternal Knowledge, Skills and Positive Health Behaviours

In a study conducted by the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) in May 2015, the **Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program (CPNP)** was found to have a positive impact on the development of knowledge, skills and positive health behaviours of the women who participate.

What is the CPNP Participant Study?

The CPNP Participant study was conducted by PHAC to examine the following questions:

- What is the demographic and risk profile of the CPNP respondents in this study?
- To what extent have respondents gained knowledge, skills and health behaviours to support maternal and infant health?
- Are improvements in knowledge, skills and health behaviours related to the level of participant exposure to the program, demographic characteristics, or the types of CPNP services received?
- To what extent are CPNP projects implementing practices to help participants feel welcomed and respected?

To answer these questions a paper based, self-administered survey was completed by a sample of prenatal and postnatal participants. Data was collected over a one-month period (May, 2015).

Outcome areas examined included:

- Nutrition and Healthy Eating;
- Prenatal Health;
- Baby Care;
- Parent Support; and
- Experience with the Program.

The Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program

The CPNP is a national community-based program funded by PHAC.

Launched in 1995, the CPNP program aims to increase access to health and social services to promote healthy pregnancies for vulnerable pregnant women and improve infant outcomes. The program also aims to build partnerships and increase the accessibility of services and community supports for pregnant women.

More than **51,000** participants attend the program every year, at one of the **280** projects across Canada.

How many Projects and Parents/Caregivers participated in the study?

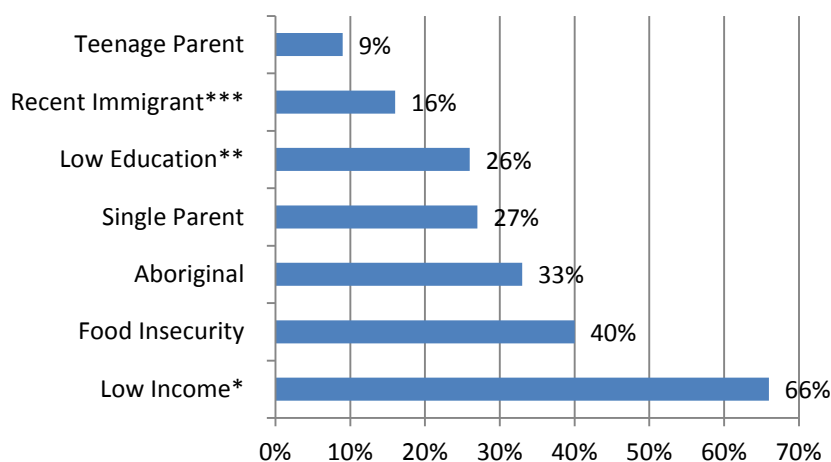
Ninety-four (**94**) randomly selected CPNP projects across Canada.

Surveys from **1,792** respondents were included in the analysis.

What did we learn?

CPNP respondents are from diverse social and demographic backgrounds.

Demographic Profile of Respondents



A significant portion of the CPNP respondents were living in vulnerable conditions.

* Calculated using Statistics Canada's 2013 Low Income Cut Offs; results represent 57% of respondents

** Less than high school

*** Living in Canada for 10 years or less

CPNP respondents reported their experience with CPNP to be positive and supportive.

Over **85%** of respondents agreed to all statements on this aspect of the survey. For example:

- **98%** of CPNP respondents reported staff treated them with dignity and respect.
- **98%** of CPNP respondents reported feeling welcomed and accepted at the program.
- **97%** of CPNP respondents reported receiving valuable information that helps them make decisions

Respondents viewed project staff as a reliable and helpful source of information and support, helping participants to feel more supported and confident in their roles as parents.

Research has shown that how support is provided to parents has an impact on the outcomes achieved.

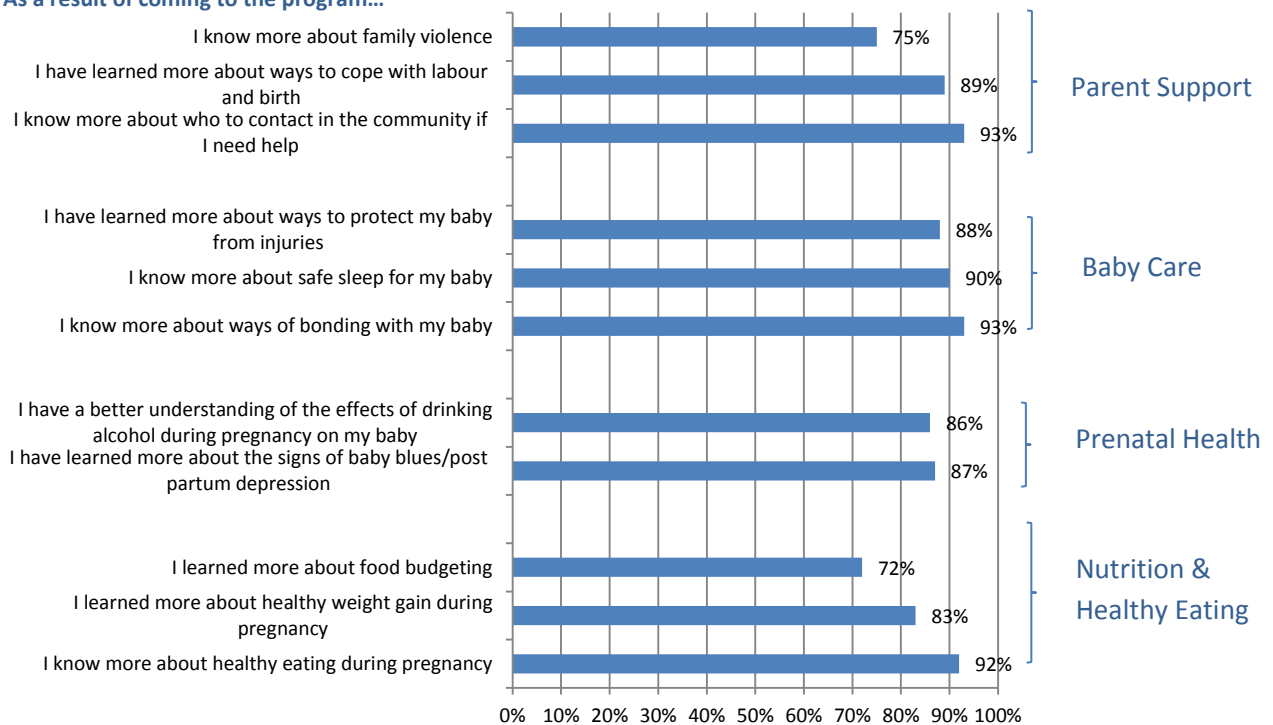
Providing services in a family friendly manner has been shown to increase parent's sense of parenting confidence and competence (Trivette & Dunst, 2009).

CPNP respondents report gaining knowledge and skills to support maternal and infant health as a result of coming to the program.

The majority of survey respondents reported learning more about nutrition and healthy eating, prenatal health care and baby care, as well as being taught strategies and skills to support them as a new parent. The graph below shows the percentage of respondents with valid responses who “agreed” or “strongly agreed” with select items on the survey.

Respondents who "Agreed" or "Strongly Agreed" to Knowledge and Skills Survey Items*

As a result of coming to the program...



*Percentages reflect participants with valid responses. Percentages do not include participants who answered “not applicable” or did not answer. As such the total sample size per item varies.

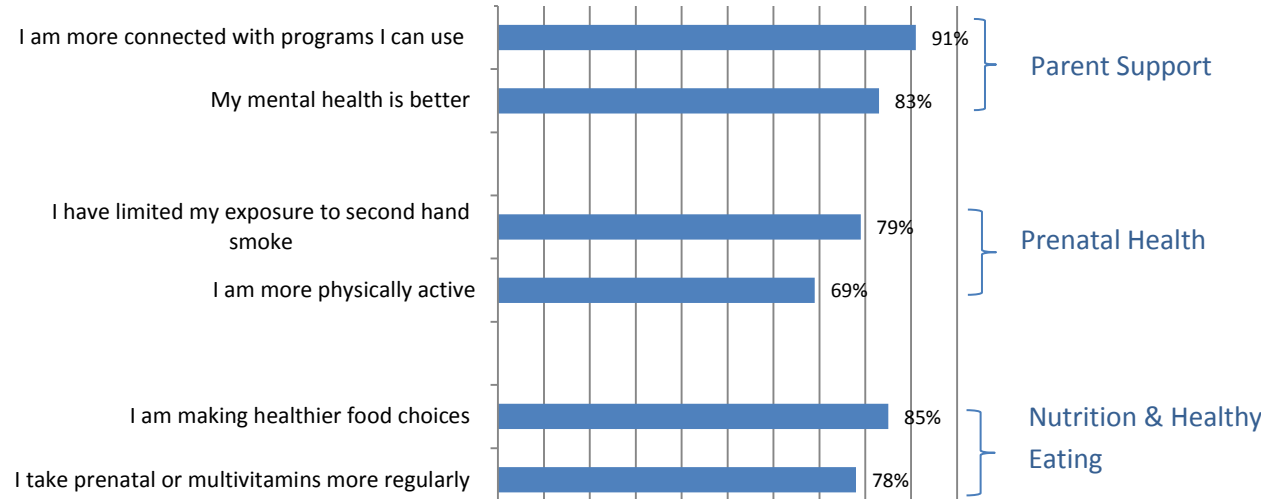


CPNP respondents reported adopting positive healthy practices for themselves and their families as a result of participating in the program.

CPNP respondents also reported increasing positive health practices as a result of their participation. The graph below shows the percentage of respondents with valid responses who “agreed” or “strongly agreed” with select items on the survey.

Respondents who "Agreed" or "Strongly Agreed" to Health Behaviour Survey Items*

As a result of coming to the program...

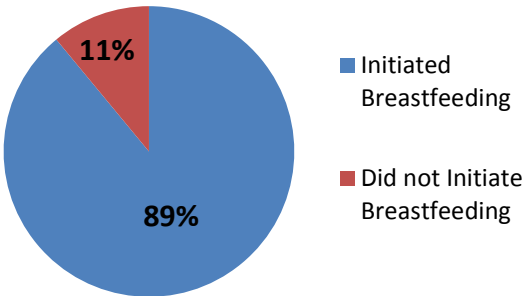


*Percentages reflect participants with valid responses. Percentages do not include participants who answered “not applicable” or did not answer. As such the total sample size per item varies.



CPNP respondents also reported the information and advice they received at CPNP helped them adopt healthier practices related to smoking, alcohol use and breastfeeding.

Postnatal Respondents who Initiated Breastfeeding



Approximately 81% of postnatal respondents noted receiving breastfeeding help or advice from CPNP staff.

SMOKING: Of those respondents who reported smoking since learning they were pregnant (27%), approximately 55% had reduced and 25% had quit smoking at the time of survey completion. Of those respondents who reported reducing or quitting their smoking, 64% stated the information and support from the CPNP helped them to do so.

ALCOHOL USE: Of those respondents who reported drinking alcohol since learning they were pregnant (5%), approximately 28% had reduced and 71% had quit at the time of survey completion. Of those respondents who reported reducing or quitting their drinking, 70% stated the information and support from the CPNP helped them to do so.



The extent to which respondents benefited from CPNP was related to aspects of program participation, demographic characteristics and the types of services

To assess the impact of program exposure, demographic characteristics, and program type, a series of regressions were conducted. The analysis examined which variables had the greatest impact on the outcome areas examined in the study. The areas examined included: nutrition and healthy eating, prenatal health, baby care and parent support.

Demographic Characteristics: The program was particularly beneficial for respondents with certain characteristics. The characteristics found to have an impact differed based on the outcome area being measured.

Program Exposure: The frequency or duration of involvement in the program was found to have an impact on 1 of the 5 outcome areas.

Program Type: The type of program attended had an impact on benefits to participants, with different types of programs improving the development of different types of knowledge, skills and health practices.



Participants in **low income** households reported improvements on all outcome areas measured.

Recent immigrants reported greater gains in the areas of nutrition and healthy eating, and prenatal health.

Participants with **higher education** tended to report greater gains in the areas of parent support

Participants who attended for a **greater length of time** were found to report gains in the prenatal health outcomes only.

Participants who attended **group programs** showed greater gains in outcomes related to prenatal health and baby care.

Participants who received **one-to-one support or individual counselling** showed greater gains in outcomes related to nutrition and healthy eating, prenatal health, and parent support.

Participants who partook in **home visiting programs** showed greater gains in nutrition and healthy eating, baby care, and parent support.

In Summary

- The CPNP program is having a positive impact on the development of knowledge, skills and positive health behaviors to support maternal and infant health.
- Program participants with certain demographic characteristics tend to benefit more from participating in the program and the full range of programs offered by CPNP is helping to ensure participants receive the knowledge, skills and support they require.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the CPNP participants and projects who actively took part in the implementation of this study. A considerable amount of time and patience was required and we thank you for your commitment.

Additionally, we would like to thank PHAC staff and other external experts, notably Dr. Carl Dunst, Dr. Karen Benzies, and Janice McAuley who shared their knowledge and advice regarding the development of the items on the survey.

The survey used in this study was informed by the following:

- 1) Benzies, K, Clarke, D, Barker, L & Mychasiuk, R. (2012). Upstart Parent Survey: A psychometrically valid tool for the evaluation of prevention-focussed parenting programs. *Maternal Child Health Journal*.
- 2) BC Early Childhood Development Project. The ECD Evaluation Project: Parent Survey Rationale. (March 2013).
- 3) FRP Canada: E-Valuation. Participant Survey.

R.A Malatest and Associates were contracted to implement this study. They conducted the data analyses and produced the reports on which this summary is based.



REFERENCES

Trivette, C. & Dunst, C. (2009). Community-Based Parent Support Programs. Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development. Retrieved from http://www.child-encyclopedia.com/Pages/PDF/Trivette-DunstANGxp_rev.pdf

For enquires please contact:

Kelly McDonald at Kelly.mcdonald@phac-aspc.gc.ca

Nicole Kenton at Nicole.Kenton@phac-aspc.gc.ca