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## Pregestational body mass index, trimester-specific weight gain and total gestational weight gain: how do they influence perinatal outcomes?

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### ABSTRACT

**Objective:** To investigate the association between pre-gestational body mass index (BMI), total gestational weight gain (GWG), and/or trimester-specific weight gain (GWGT) with adverse maternal or perinatal outcomes (AMPOs).

**Materials and methods:** Maternal clinical characteristics and pregnancy and perinatal outcomes were used to predict AMPOs. The predictive ability of BMI, GWG, or GWGT for AMPOs was analyzed using the area under the curve (AUC). Logistic regression models in a univariate and multivariate analysis were performed to estimate the odds ratios (OR) and 95% confidence intervals (CI) to predict maternal outcomes (pregnancy-induced hypertension, preeclampsia or gestational diabetes mellitus) and perinatal outcomes (small for gestational age, large for gestational age, 5-min Apgar score, admission to neonatal intensive care unit or umbilical cord pH <7.15).

**Results:** Women with AMPOs ( $n=293$ ) were younger with higher rate of nulliparity ( $p<.001$ ) and with lower height ( $p=.018$ ) as compared to controls ( $n=134$ ). In the univariate study, GWGT in third trimester was associated with double risk of pregnancy-induced hypertension (OR 2.00; 95% CI, 1.01–3.97). Nonetheless, third-trimester GWG and total GWG have a negative relationship with gestational diabetes mellitus OR 0.32 (95% CI, 0.18–0.58) and OR 0.35 (95% CI, 0.21–0.59), respectively. Women with greater overall and in second trimester, GWG have a lower risk of having SGA neonates, OR 0.62 (95% CI, 0.39–0.98) and OR 0.60 (95% CI, 0.37–0.98), respectively. In the multivariate study, pre-gestational BMI is strongly related to the development of preeclampsia and the area under the curve (AUC) of the combination of pre-gestational BMI and total weight gain was 0.832 (95% CI, 0.63–0.81) for preeclampsia and 0.719 (95% CI, 0.71–0.94) for gestational diabetes mellitus.

**Conclusion:** Our results suggest that timing of gestational weight gain influence in maternal and perinatal outcomes. Pre-gestational BMI is a determinant of preeclampsia, maternal weight gain in the third trimester is a determinant of pregnancy-induced hypertension and the increase in total GWG reduces the risk of gestational diabetes mellitus and small for gestational age.

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### KEYWORDS

Gestational weight gain; maternal and neonatal outcomes; obesity; pre-gestational body mass index; pregnancy

### Introduction

Worldwide, overweight and obesity are an increasing problem affecting over a third of the world's population today. If secular trends continue, by 2030, an estimated 38% of the world's adult population will be overweight and another 20% will be obese [1]. In recent years, maternal pre-gestational body mass index (BMI) has increased among women of childbearing age in developed countries. In Europe, it is estimated that up to 50% of the adult population is overweight or obese and only 2% is underweight [2]

Among pregnant women, the European prevalence of obesity is between 1.8 and 25.3% [3], a wide range due to the heterogeneity of socio-demographic characteristics and different levels of welfare among countries.

The increasing prevalence of obesity in women of reproductive age will affect obstetric outcomes. There is increasing evidence that pre-gestational BMI and total gestational weight gain (GWG) are risk factors for the development of maternal and perinatal complications [4,5].

Some studies suggest an association between maternal pre-gestational BMI and complications during

pregnancy, delivery, and the postpartum period for both mother and offspring [6,7], including hypertensive disorders in pregnancy [8], gestational diabetes mellitus (GDM) [9], induction of labor, postpartum hemorrhage (PPH) [10], cesarean section [11] and maternal, perinatal, and infant deaths [12].

Other studies have shown that increasing GWG is associated with higher risk of gestational hypertension [13], preeclampsia [14], and cesarean section [15]. Also, some studies have shown the association with neonatal outcomes such as low birthweight [16,17], low Apgar score or admission to the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) [18].

However, there are a few studies that relate the trimester-specific GWG and maternal or neonatal outcomes. Therefore, this study aimed to investigate the association between pre-gestational BMI, trimester-specific and total GWG as continuous risk factors associated with comorbidities.

## Materials and methods

We retrospectively collected data from 427 deliveries in the Miguel Servet University Hospital (Zaragoza, Spain) from December 2014 to February 2015. An observational study regarding pre-gestational BMI, trimester-specific, and total GWG and maternal and perinatal outcomes was performed.

The inclusion criteria were gestational age at birth over 37 weeks and singleton pregnancy with follow-up at least from 12 weeks. The exclusion criteria were chronic hypertension, pre-gestational diabetes mellitus, antepartum fetal death, and scheduled cesarean section.

In this study, all pregnant women were measured for the height and weight at their first antenatal visit following Fattah et al. [19] recommendations who concluded that maternal mean weight and body composition remained practically constant in the first trimester. BMI was further categorized into four groups: underweight ( $<18.5 \text{ kg/m}^2$ ), normal weight ( $18.5\text{--}24.9 \text{ kg/m}^2$ ), overweight ( $25.0\text{--}29.9 \text{ kg/m}^2$ ) and obese ( $>30.0 \text{ kg/m}^2$ ). GWG (kg) was calculated by subtracting maternal first antenatal visit weight from maternal weight at delivery. The trimester-specific GWG was calculated by subtracting the weight at the beginning of the trimester from the weight at the end of the trimester.

We explored the predictive ability of trimester-specific weight gain and the total GWG combined or not with pre-gestational BMI to diagnose different adverse maternal and perinatal outcomes (AMPOs). The

predictors are analyzed as continuous variables and the AMPOs considered were GDM (having at least two plasma glucose values elevated on the 100g glucose tolerance test), pregnancy induced hypertension (PIH) (systolic blood pressure  $>140 \text{ mmHg}$  or diastolic blood pressure  $>90 \text{ mmHg}$  after 20th week of gestation), preeclampsia (blood pressure  $>140/90$  or increases of  $30 \text{ mmHg}$  of the systolic blood pressure or  $15 \text{ mmHg}$  of the diastolic blood pressure or  $20 \text{ mmHg}$  of the mean arterial blood pressure, which is accompanied by proteinuria and/or edema after 20th week of gestation), premature rupture of membranes (PROM), PPH, shoulder dystocia, operative vaginal delivery, cesarean section, umbilical cord pH  $<7.15$ , admission to NICU, 5-min Apgar score, small for gestational age (SGA) (birth weight  $<10$ th percentile) and large for gestational age (LGA) (birth weight  $>90$ th percentile) [20].

A univariate and multivariate analysis was performed using logistic regression model. The predictive model was assessed through discrimination analysis using the area under the curve (AUC) and the odds ratio were estimated. The data were analyzed using Research Language programming version 3.3.2 (the R Foundation for Statistical Computing, Vienna, Austria) [21].

## Results

### Pregnancies characteristics

Table 1 shows the descriptive characteristics of 427 studied pregnant women. Median age was 33 years, with a 58% rate of nulliparity. The median value of BMI was 23.1 and 25% and 75% quartiles were 20.9 and 26.4 respectively. Regarding AMPOs, the prevalence was 68.7% in the entire population, infants with a 5-min Apgar score  $<7$  represented 0.5%, percentages of instrumental delivery or cesarean section were, respectively 20.1 and 9.4%, arterial cord blood pH  $<7.15$ , 7.7%, PIH 2.3%, preeclampsia 1.9%, and GDM 6.8%.

### Pre-gestational BMI, specific-trimester weight gain and total gestational weight gain

Table 2 shows the univariate analysis of the predictive ability of pre-gestational BMI, trimester-specific weight gain and total weight gain to predict adverse perinatal outcomes.

In relation to PE, it was observed that the development of this disease during pregnancy was mainly related to pre-pregnancy BMI. The risk of suffering PE

**Table 1.** Descriptive characteristics of study population.

| Characteristics                               | n = 427           |
|---|-------------------|
| Clinical characteristics                      |                   |
| Maternal age (years)                          | 33 (30, 35)       |
| Maternal body mass index (kg/m <sup>2</sup> ) | 23.1 (20.9, 26.4) |
| Maternal height (cm)                          | 163 (159, 168)    |
| Paternal height (cm)                          | 176 (172, 181)    |
| Parity  |                   |
| 0   | 248 (58.1%)       |
| 1   | 149 (34.09%)      |
| ≥2  | 30 (7.0%)         |
| Previous abortions                            |                   |
| 0   | 301 (70.5%)       |
| 1   | 95 (22.2%)        |
| ≥2  | 31 (7.3%)         |
| Previous cesarean                             |                   |
| 0   | 396 (92.7%)       |
| ≥1  | 31 (7.3%)         |
| Maternal ethnicity                            |                   |
| Caucasian                                     | 393 (90.0%)       |
| Asian   | 4 (0.9%)          |
| African                                       | 30 (9.1%)         |
| Maternal smoking habits                       |                   |
| Yes   | 58 (13.6%)        |
| No  | 369 (86.4%)       |
| Newborn gender                                |                   |
| Female  | 208 (48.7%)       |
| Male  | 219 (51.3%)       |
| Specific-trimester weight gain                |                   |
| 1st trimester                                 | 0.8 (−0.3, 2.1)   |
| 2nd trimester                                 | 5.0 (3.5, 6.8)    |
| 3rd trimester                                 | 5.8 (4.0, 8.3)    |
| Total weight gain                             | 11.8 (9.0, 15.0)  |
| Delivery and perinatal outcomes               |                   |
| Gestational age at birth (weeks)              | 40.0 (39.1, 40.7) |
| Birth weight (grams)                          | 3330 (2990, 3670) |
| Pregnancy induced hypertension                | 10 (2.3%)         |
| Preeclampsia                                  | 8 (1.9%)          |
| Gestational diabetes mellitus                 | 29 (6.8%)         |
| Premature rupture of membranes                | 109 (25.5%)       |
| Instrumental delivery                         | 86 (20.1%)        |
| Cesarean section                              | 40 (9.4%)         |
| Postpartum hemorrhage                         | 9 (2.1%)          |
| Shoulder dystocia                             | 9 (2.1%)          |
| Small for gestational age                     | 34 (8%)           |
| Large for gestational age                     | 54 (12.6%)        |
| Apgar score ≤7 (5 minutes)                    | 2 (0.5%)          |
| Neonatal intensive care unit                  | 22 (5.2%)         |
| Postpartum pH <7.15                           | 33 (7.7%)         |

was increased by 2 at higher pre-gestational BMI (OR 2.00; 95% CI, 1.21–3.33).

Weight gain in first trimester has a significant association with instrumental delivery (OR 1.34; 95% CI, 1.02–1.76). With weight gain in first trimester, no statistically significant association was found with any of the maternal variables under study. The same happened with weight gain in second trimester, except for PROM in which a significant association was obtained with a lower risk (OR 0.73; 95% CI, 0.56–0.97). An increased risk of PIH was observed in the third trimester (OR 2.00; 95% CI, 1.01–3.97). GWG in third trimester (OR 0.32; 95% CI, 0.18–0.58) and the total weight gain (OR 0.35; 95% CI, 0.21–0.59) were protective factors for the development of GDM. No statistically significant association was found

neither for postpartum hemorrhage nor for shoulder dystocia.

Total GWG is a protective factor for the development of a SGA (OR 0.62; 95% CI, 0.39–0.98) and a risk factor for a large fetus for gestational age (OR 1.40; 95% CI, 0.99–1.98). No statistically significant association was found for the rest of the perinatal results.

As it can be seen in Table 3, built predictive models have a moderate discrimination ability to predict AMPOs, except for PE and GDM. The AUC of the combination of pre-gestational BMI and total weight gain was 0.832 (95% CI, 0.63–0.81) for PE and 0.719 (95% CI, 0.71–0.94) for GDM that can be considered a good discrimination ability (Figure 1). Pre-gestational BMI and GWG have a nonlinear relation with preeclampsia adjusted using restricted cubic splines.

## Discussion

The mean total weight gain in this study was  $12.17 \pm 4.83$  kg, which is within the weight range recommended by the Institute of Medicine (IOM) for pregnant women with normal pre-gestational BMI, but lower than the average weight (14–15.1 kg) of other studies in European population [22,23].

In the research conducted by Sekiya et al. [24], the average weight gain in the first trimester was  $2.3 \pm 2.1$  kg, in the second trimester  $7.0 \pm 2.0$  kg and in the third trimester  $6.3 \pm 2.4$  kg. These results are similar to those of the present study in the mean weight gain of the third trimester ( $6.14 \pm 3.31$  kg) but higher in the gain of the first trimester ( $0.91 \pm 2.09$  kg) and of the second ( $5.14 \pm 2.66$  kg). The weight gain of the first trimester in the present study, although it may seem scarce, is within the range recommended by the IOM between 0.5 and 2 kg [25].

The percentage of women with pre-gestational BMI  $< 18.5$  kg/m<sup>2</sup> (2.58%) was similar to other European countries [26] but lower than Asian population, where the prevalence of thinness is higher (14–17%) [27,28]. The prevalence of overweight and obesity in our population, 24.82 and 9.60%, respectively, is similar than global average in developed countries [26]. According to other studies, as pre-gestational BMI increases, GWG decreases, both globally and per trimester [17].

This study demonstrates the usefulness of pre-pregnancy BMI, total weight gain and trimester-specific weight gain as risk predictors of AMPOs: preeclampsia, pregnancy-induced hypertension, gestational diabetes mellitus, and large for gestational age.

**Table 2.** Univariate analysis of the predictive ability of pre-gestational body mass index, trimester-specific weight gain and total weight gain to predict adverse maternal and perinatal outcomes.

| Outcome                       | Pre-gestational body mass index | Gestational weight gain 1st trimester | Gestational weight gain 2nd trimester | Gestational weight gain 3rd trimester | Total gestational weight gain |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Adverse maternal outcomes     |                                 |                                       |                                       |                                       |                               |
| PIH                           | 1.33 (0.73–2.42) 0.644          | 0.88 (0.43–1.76) 0.539                | 1.06 (0.48–2.30) 0.494                | 2.00 (1.01–3.97) 0.634                | 1.61 (0.79–3.29) 0.626        |
|                               | OR                              |                                       |                                       |                                       |                               |
|                               | AUC                             |                                       |                                       |                                       |                               |
| Preeclampsia                  | 2.00 (1.21–3.33) 0.808          | 0.90 (0.41–1.96) 0.554                | 1.63 (0.70–3.81) 0.632                | 1.01 (0.41–2.50) 0.500                | 1.26 (0.55–2.90) 0.565        |
|                               | OR                              |                                       |                                       |                                       |                               |
|                               | AUC                             |                                       |                                       |                                       |                               |
| Gestational diabetes mellitus | 1.64 (1.15–2.33) 0.620          | 0.68 (0.45–1.03) 0.569                | 0.84 (0.52–1.34) 0.537                | 0.32 (0.18–0.58) 0.723                | 0.35 (0.21–0.59) 0.715        |
|                               | OR                              |                                       |                                       |                                       |                               |
|                               | AUC                             |                                       |                                       |                                       |                               |
| PROM                          | 0.83 (0.63–1.10) 0.540          | 1.20 (0.94–1.54) 0.551                | 0.73 (0.56–0.97) 0.574                | 0.99 (0.74–1.31) 0.516                | 0.93 (0.71–1.22) 0.517        |
|                               | OR                              |                                       |                                       |                                       |                               |
|                               | AUC                             |                                       |                                       |                                       |                               |
| Postpartum hemorrhage         | 1.58 (0.92–2.73) 0.595          | 0.67 (0.33–1.34) 0.583                | 0.50 (0.22–1.15) 0.561                | 0.85 (0.35–2.06) 0.538                | 0.54 (0.23–1.28) 0.614        |
|                               | OR                              |                                       |                                       |                                       |                               |
|                               | AUC                             |                                       |                                       |                                       |                               |
| Instrumental delivery         | 1.01 (0.76–1.34) 0.493          | 1.34 (1.02–1.76) 0.588                | 1.09 (0.81–1.46) 0.511                | 1.04 (0.77–1.41) 0.514                | 1.23 (0.92–1.65) 0.534        |
|                               | OR                              |                                       |                                       |                                       |                               |
|                               | AUC                             |                                       |                                       |                                       |                               |
| Cesarean section              | 1.20 (0.84–1.70) 0.559          | 1.17 (0.81–1.70) 0.536                | 1.36 (0.91–2.03) 0.589                | 1.07 (0.71–1.63) 0.534                | 1.34 (0.91–1.99) 0.587        |
|                               | OR                              |                                       |                                       |                                       |                               |
|                               | AUC                             |                                       |                                       |                                       |                               |
| Adverse perinatal outcomes    |                                 |                                       |                                       |                                       |                               |
| Shoulder dystocia             | 0.62 (0.22–1.74) 0.572          | 1.26 (0.60–2.64) 0.555                | 1.00 (0.44–2.26) 0.500                | 0.97 (0.41–2.30) 0.506                | 1.10 (0.49–2.47) 0.552        |
|                               | OR                              |                                       |                                       |                                       |                               |
|                               | AUC                             |                                       |                                       |                                       |                               |
| Small for gestational age     | 0.87 (0.55–1.35) 0.553          | 0.87 (0.58–1.26) 0.561                | 0.67 (0.43–1.05) 0.585                | 0.88 (0.55–1.41) 0.534                | 0.62 (0.39–0.98) 0.599        |
|                               | OR                              |                                       |                                       |                                       |                               |
|                               | AUC                             |                                       |                                       |                                       |                               |
| Large for gestational age     | 1.16 (0.84–1.60) 0.515          | 1.22 (0.88–1.69) 0.525                | 1.36 (0.95–1.93) 0.557                | 1.05 (0.73–1.52) 0.511                | 1.40 (0.99–1.98) 0.553        |
|                               | OR                              |                                       |                                       |                                       |                               |
|                               | AUC                             |                                       |                                       |                                       |                               |
| 5-min Apgar <7                | 0.89 (0.54–1.46) 0.541          | 0.81 (0.49–1.34) 0.553                | 0.92 (0.53–1.61) 0.534                | 1.56 (0.83–2.93) 0.549                | 1.16 (0.66–2.04) 0.528        |
|                               | OR                              |                                       |                                       |                                       |                               |
|                               | AUC                             |                                       |                                       |                                       |                               |
| NICU                          | 0.29 (0.02–4.76) 0.668          | 1.37 (0.30–6.32) 0.621                | 0.89 (0.16–5.05) 0.529                | 1.08 (0.18–6.34) 0.501                | 1.16 (0.21–6.24) 0.539        |
|                               | OR                              |                                       |                                       |                                       |                               |
|                               | AUC                             |                                       |                                       |                                       |                               |
| Umbilical cord pH < 7.15      | 1.32 (0.80–2.17) 0.548          | 1.06 (0.71–1.58) 0.522                | 0.71 (0.46–1.10) 0.579                | 1.04 (0.65–1.66) 0.529                | 0.87 (0.56–1.35) 0.506        |
|                               | OR                              |                                       |                                       |                                       |                               |
|                               | AUC                             |                                       |                                       |                                       |                               |

PIH: pregnancy induced hypertension; PROM: premature rupture of membranes; NICU: neonatal intensive care unit.

**Table 3.** Predictive multivariate model according to pre-gestational body mass index, trimester-specific weight gain and total weight gain to predict adverse maternal and perinatal outcomes.

| Outcome                           | Pre-gestational BMI | Gestational weight gain 1st Trimester | Gestational weight gain 2nd Trimester | Gestational weight gain 3rd Trimester | AUC   | Body mass index  | Total GWG        | AUC   |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------|------------------|------------------|-------|
| <b>Adverse maternal outcomes</b>  |                     |                                       |                                       |                                       |       |                  |                  |       |
| PIH                               | 1.56 (0.80–3.05)    | 0.84 (0.44–1.62)                      | 1.29 (0.61–2.72)                      | 2.23 (1.10–4.55)                      | 0.673 | 1.54 (0.81–2.93) | 1.77 (0.88–3.56) | 0.676 |
| Preeclampsia                      | 2.48 (1.38–2.44)    | 0.95 (0.48–1.89)                      | 2.11 (0.93–4.77)                      | 1.44 (0.58–3.59)                      | 0.801 | 2.34 (1.34–4.11) | 1.76 (0.79–3.90) | 0.832 |
| Gestational diabetes mellitus     | 1.35 (0.92–1.99)    | 0.76 (0.49–1.16)                      | 0.91 (0.50–1.48)                      | 0.35 (0.19–0.65)                      | 0.732 | 1.28 (0.87–1.90) | 0.40 (0.23–0.71) | 0.719 |
| PROM                              | 0.76 (0.57–1.03)    | 1.20 (0.93–1.55)                      | 0.68 (0.50–0.91)                      | 0.92 (0.69–1.23)                      | 0.606 | 0.80 (0.60–1.07) | 0.88 (0.66–1.17) | 0.550 |
| Postpartum hemorrhage             | 1.30 (0.69–2.45)    | 0.69 (0.33–1.46)                      | 0.54 (0.22–1.34)                      | 0.92 (0.39–2.16)                      | 0.626 | 1.40 (0.77–2.57) | 1.01 (0.42–2.41) | 0.667 |
| Instrumental delivery             | 1.06 (0.78–1.42)    | 1.34 (1.02–1.75)                      | 1.08 (0.80–1.46)                      | 1.02 (0.75–1.39)                      | 0.586 | 1.06 (0.79–1.43) | 1.25 (0.93–1.69) | 0.538 |
| Cesarean section                  | 1.33 (0.92–1.93)    | 1.16 (0.82–1.66)                      | 1.42 (0.96–2.12)                      | 1.12 (0.73–1.71)                      | 0.620 | 1.31 (0.90–1.90) | 1.44 (0.97–2.13) | 0.611 |
| <b>Adverse perinatal outcomes</b> |                     |                                       |                                       |                                       |       |                  |                  |       |
| Shoulder dystocia                 | 0.61 (0.21–1.75)    | 1.26 (0.57–2.77)                      | 0.90 (0.38–2.16)                      | 0.91 (0.37–2.13)                      | 0.604 | 0.62 (0.22–1.77) | 1.01 (0.42–2.41) | 0.572 |
| Small for gestational age         | 0.73 (0.45–1.19)    | 0.82 (0.54–1.25)                      | 0.60 (0.37–0.98)                      | 0.84 (0.52–1.35)                      | 0.606 | 0.74 (0.46–1.20) | 0.56 (0.34–0.93) | 0.614 |
| Large for gestational age         | 1.29 (0.92–1.80)    | 1.21 (0.88–1.67)                      | 1.41 (0.99–2.00)                      | 1.09 (0.75–1.58)                      | 0.581 | 1.29 (0.92–1.80) | 1.48 (1.04–2.10) | 0.571 |
| 5 min – Apgar <7                  | 0.91 (0.54–1.52)    | 0.78 (0.47–1.30)                      | 0.93 (0.53–1.62)                      | 1.56 (0.82–2.95)                      | 0.590 | 0.92 (0.54–1.54) | 1.13 (0.63–2.02) | 0.536 |
| NICU                              | 0.27 (0.02–4.65)    | 1.41 (0.25–7.84)                      | 0.72 (0.10–5.01)                      | 1.01 (0.15–6.78)                      | 0.745 | 0.29 (0.02–4.80) | 1.02 (0.15–6.91) | 0.666 |
| Umbilical cord pH <7.15           | 1.26 (0.76–2.10)    | 1.09 (0.72–1.64)                      | 0.73 (0.46–1.16)                      | 1.05 (0.65–1.71)                      | 0.590 | 1.29 (0.77–2.15) | 0.92 (0.58–1.45) | 0.545 |

BMI: body mass index; PIH: pregnancy induced hypertension; PROM: premature rupture of membranes; NICU: neonatal intensive care unit.

### Preeclampsia and pregnancy induced hypertension

In relation to hypertensive disorders in pregnancy, many factors are involved in its pathogenesis, but both the increase in PE and PIH can be explained by changes in inflammatory mediators by obesity [29].

The present study shows that a high pre-pregnancy BMI is strongly associated with the development of PE. A meta-analysis published in 2016 shows sufficient evidence that excess BMI is significantly associated with an increased risk of preeclampsia. It was associated with overweight (OR 1.73; 95% CI: 1.59–1.87) and obesity (OR 3.15; 95% CI: 2.96–3.35). In our study, we found even higher values, with an OR of 5.9 (95% CI: 1.18–29.68) for overweight, and OR of 6.02 (95% CI: 1.38–26.16) for obesity. Therefore, overweight and obesity can be considered as a predictor of preeclampsia [30].

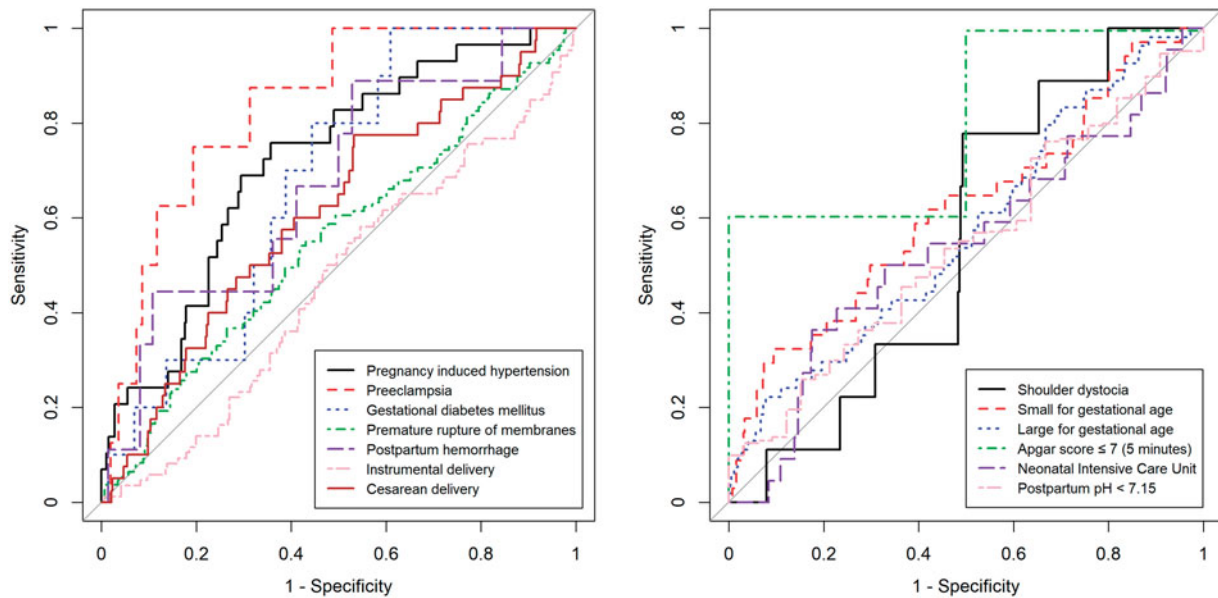
In PIH, there is an increase in risk according to pre-pregnancy BMI, although it is not significant. However, other studies like Scott-Pillai et al. show ORs for PIH varying between 1.19 (95% CI 1.1–2.3) for women with overweight and 6.6 (95% CI 4.9–8.9) for women with obesity [10].

In addition, in this study, there was found an increase of double risk of PIH with weight gain in the third trimester. Although the association did not reach the statistical significance in the other trimesters, there is a trend in the progressive increase of the risk, being lesser in the first trimester and higher in the second trimester. Similar results were obtained by Gaillard et al. with a significant increase in risk in all trimesters, although with the highest risk in the third trimester (OR 1.27; 95% CI: 1.06–1.51,  $p < .01$ ) [31].

### Gestational diabetes mellitus

In addition, a high pre-pregnancy BMI is a recognized risk factor for GDM [10,32], as is also demonstrated in this study, with an almost two-fold increase in the risk of gestational diabetes and several previous studies have shown that women with excessive GWG are at increased risk for GDM [33,34].

Nevertheless, in this study, we found that third-trimester weight gain and total weight gain have a negative relationship with GDM reducing its development by 65 and 60%, respectively. The explanation for these results is uncertain, although a theory could be that management of women with GDM includes dietary counseling, lifestyle modification, regular monitoring of blood sugar levels, and insulin treatment, so that their diet would be modified in such a way that



**Figure 1.** Area under the curve of the predictive capacity of body mass index, gestational weight gain or specific-trimester weight gain for adverse maternal (left) and perinatal outcomes (right).

limits their weight gain [35]. Similar results obtained Dai et al. with a reduction in the risk of diabetes with GWG in the third trimester (OR 0.53; 95% CI: 0.28–0.99) [36].

### Neonatal birth weight

Regarding neonatal birth weight, its relationship with pre-gestational BMI and total GWG is clearly demonstrated in the literature [18,37]. There are several studies that establish a positive association between high pre-gestational BMI or total GWG and having LGA neonates [38]. In contrast, low BMI or total GWG increase the risk of SGA [24]. Nevertheless, there are a few studies that analyze specific-trimester weight gain as a risk factor associated with comorbidities [31,36]. In this study, women in the second trimester with a greater overall weight gain have lower risk of having SGA neonates. Also, Gaillard et al. reached similar results reducing the risk of SGA with GWG in each trimester, but obtaining the lowest risk with GWG in the second one. Young et al. [39] studied the relationship of weight gain in three periods of gestation ( $\leq 20$  weeks, 21–29 weeks,  $\geq 30$  weeks) and neonatal birth weight, getting an increase in one standard deviation of weight below 20th week has three times greater influence than compared to the same weight gain from 30th week and it is also associated with a 48% reduction in SGA risk.

Finally, regarding other AMPOs analyzed, previous published studies explored total weight gain during

pregnancy rather than trimester weight gain. Gosselink et al. reported that the weight gain during pregnancy was associated with preterm and full term PROM [40], but in our analysis we did not find this relation, only weight gain in the second trimester show association with PROM as a protective factor. In the study of instrumental delivery and cesarean section, only the weight gain during first trimester shown an association with instrumental delivery (OR 1.34), similar to a previous study of Morken et al. (OR 1.2) [41] but in a categorization of total weight gain during pregnancy with a cutoff of 16 kg.

### Strengths and limitations

Our study has both strengths and limitations. The data were rigorously collected and the inclusion criteria, women without medical problems, were such that we were able to create a cohort of women at a theoretically low risk of these outcomes. In the great majority of publications, pre-pregnancy weight was self-reported, which is subject to recall error and can lead to under- or overestimation of GWG. The qualitative difference between self-reported data and measured data is debated in several studies [42,43], such as a review by Engstrom et al. [44], which showed that women tend to underestimate their weight and to overestimate their height, which may lead to an incorrect classification of BMI. Also, an analysis of the maternal and perinatal results according to specific-trimester weight increase was made. However, our study was limited by its observational and

retrospective design. There might be unmeasured confounders that were not accounted for in this study.

## Conclusion

Pre-gestational BMI is clearly associated with the development of PE, increasing the risk to double. The increase in total GWG reduces the risk of GDM and SGA and the increase in weight in the third trimester is associated with the development of PIH. Because of that, it is important to underscore the importance of high quality preconception care to ensure that a woman is in optimal health prior to becoming pregnant and control gestational weight gain particularly in third trimester. In this sense, we recommend of going for an antenatal visit in order to check the BMI for women previous to pregnancy.

## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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