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4.	Name of the Research Guide	Dr. S. Uma Mageshwari
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### INTRODUCTION

Maternal nutrition significantly impacts the health of the mother and the development of the fetus. Optimum nutrition status minimises maternal complications such as anaemia, gestational diabetes mellitus, pre-eclampsia, and foetal problems such as preterm birth, low birth weight and birth defects. The period leading to conception is also critical as it lays the foundation of a healthy pregnancy and the future development of the baby. Maternal health during gestation and its association with gestational diabetes mellitus (GDM) is currently attracting attention due to the implications of GDM on the mother and the baby. Although there is some understanding of proper nutrition during pregnancy, the misconception of 'eating for two' still exists in many families. Maintenance of ideal body weight, following a nutritious and balanced diet, involving in adequate physical activity, entering pregnancy at a younger age, correcting or controlling any metabolic imbalances or health conditions before conception, educating oneself of the signs and symptoms of pregnancy-related problems and complications, following the antenatal regimen advised by the doctor and readiness to pregnancy are all factors that influence a safe and healthy pregnancy journey. Rapid urbanisation, which is associated with increasing prevalence of non-communicable diseases, has also impacted GDM not only in urban areas but also in rural areas. Public health strategies thus need to focus on bringing about improvements in health care and efforts must be taken for increasing the awareness on GDM, its risk factors and complications in both urban and rural sectors.

The available data on GDM points towards its increasing incidence in women of all ethnicities and social strata. The International Diabetes Federation (IDF) Atlas 2021 revealed the Southeast Asian region had the highest prevalence of GDM at 28 percent compared to 8.6 percent in the Middle East and North American regions and an estimated 87.5 percent affected with hyperglycaemia in pregnancy was found among low and middle income countries. Savitha and Magehwari (2013) reported an exponential increase in the incidence of gestational diabetes mellitus from four to six percent in the early 90s to 16 to 20 percent of all pregnancies in India. The trend of its increase is similar to Type 2 DM posing a greater risk for maternal and foetal complications (Bhavadarini et al., 2016). In a recent meta-analysis and systematic review conducted on the national and region wise prevalence of GDM in India, an overall prevalence rate of 13 percent was reported and the highest GDM prevalence

# Development and Optimisation of a Sustainable Standard Operating Protocol for Medical Nutrition Therapy to Improve Maternal and Foetal Outcomes among Gestational Diabetes Mellitus women

*by Central Library Avinashilingam*

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