Study Examines Dietary Sodium, Potassium, and Blood Pressure in Normotensive Pregnant Women

Scientists from the Arnold School of Public Health’s Department of Exercise Science and Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics along with the School of Medicine at the University of South Carolina have completed a study on dietary sodium, potassium, and blood pressure in normotensive pregnant women. They published their paper in *Applied, Physiology, Nutrition and Metabolism*.

“Dietary sodium, potassium, and sodium-to-potassium ratio are linearly associated with blood pressure in nonpregnant adults,” says Abbi Lane-Cordova, Associate Professor of Exercise Science and lead author on the paper. “Earlier investigations suggested null or inverse associations of blood pressure and sodium during normotensive pregnancy, but these findings have not been confirmed in race/ethnically diverse women or while accounting for potassium.”

With this study, the researchers evaluated associations of blood pressure with sodium and potassium and sodium-to-potassium ratio in race/ethnically diverse normotensive pregnant women. They used cross-sectional blood pressure and dietary data from nearly one thousand women in multiple cycles of the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey.

The authors found that systolic and diastolic blood pressure rates were similar across varying levels of sodium intake, with similar results in stratified analyses. In summary, they found no association of sodium or potassium with blood pressure, suggesting that blood pressure may be insensitive to dietary sodium and potassium during normotensive pregnancy.