

## **Availability and use of internet social networks for women with physical disabilities during pregnancy**

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**TOPIC/TARGET AUDIENCE:** Public Health Professionals; Disability and Health Professionals

**ABSTRACT:** Background: Research shows that women with physical disabilities become pregnant. Social support during pregnancy is important for the health of mother and baby. Internet social networks are one source of social support. Women with disabilities report insufficient social support during pregnancy.

**Purpose:** One purpose is to systematically examine pregnancy-related and disability-related internet social networks for existence of groups focused on women with disabilities during pregnancy. A second purpose is to survey women with disabilities who have been pregnant to learn about their use of internet social networks during pregnancy and their social support from women with similar disability experiences.

**Methods:** A systematic review of internet social networks and Facebook was conducted. A survey targeting women with disability who have been pregnant was distributed through email lists, social media and snowball recruitment.

**Results:** Nine websites met inclusion criteria for this review. Four of these nine sites had groups where multiple participants exchanged information about pregnancy and disability topics. Facebook review revealed similar results. The survey results will offer further context about social support received by these women.

**Conclusions:** This review indicates that a small number of women use the internet for social support specific to disability and pregnancy.

### **OBJECTIVE(S):**

- Describe the intersectionality of disability and pregnancy.
- Assess the ability of internet social networks to aid in emotional and informational social support for pregnant women with disabilities.

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