EXERCISING INSTRUCTIONS FOR EXPECTANT MOTHERS

Background

Working with student health as a physiotherapist, one meets students who are pregnant and come in with various ailments or pains. Back problems are among the most common ailments. During a physiotherapist's appointment, it is also possible to provide preventive guidance for students who are planning to get pregnant and are worried about their earlier back problems perhaps becoming worse during pregnancy.

The pamphlet *Exercising Instructions for Expectant Mothers* was put together by two FSHS physiotherapists in 2009-2010. When creating the pamphlet, other FSHS physiotherapists were consulted as well.

Purpose

To create an informative and visual pamphlet suitable for guiding pregnant students to take appropriate exercise.

Objectives

1. The pamphlet makes a good tool to have available in a student health physiotherapist's appointment room.
2. Public health nurses and doctors can use the pamphlet when giving instructions to pregnant students concerning their exercising.

Conclusion

The pamphlet forms an aid for a physiotherapist's work for guiding pregnant students.

Outputs

The first section of the pamphlet *Exercising Instructions for Expectant Mothers* contains general information, encouraging mothers to take exercise throughout their pregnancy. This section discusses, at a general level, the benefits of exercise for the mother and child equally. This general information section also explains what sorts of exercise to avoid. In addition, the first section discusses bodily changes that take place during pregnancy and factors that affect them. This is intended to motivate students to exercise the muscles which support their posture. Exercising these muscles is important throughout the pregnancy.

The second section focuses on training the pelvic floor muscles, as it is good to strengthen them before childbirth.

The third section of the pamphlet describes, visually and verbally, concrete motions for mid-torso exercises to help the expectant mother feel better and to prevent pains and other symptoms. Methods for stretching the neck and shoulders, and positions for relaxing the back are all found in this section.

The fourth section of the pamphlet, the last one, discusses post-delivery exercising at a general level and indicates what to avoid. It also encourages the new mother to exercise the pelvic floor muscles starting from right after delivery. The last section discusses matters such as neck and shoulder problems and wrist pains related to caring for, carrying and nursing the baby, and goes into how these could be prevented.