



Full Length Research Paper

Knowledge and utilization of post natal care services among women in Edu Local Government Area, Kwara State, Nigeria

^{1*}Umar N. Jibril, ²Sanusi Arimiyau A., ³Rejuaro F. M., ⁴Imam A.A, ⁵Ibraheem M.A.,
⁶Abdulrasheed G.

^{1,3,4,5,6} Department of Nursing Science, College of Health Sciences, University of Ilorin, Ilorin Nigeria.

²Department of Health Promotion and Environmental Health Education, Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria.*Corresponding Author's E-mail: umaribna@gmail.com

Abstract

This study determines the knowledge and utilization of post natal care services in Edu Local Government Area of Kwara State, Nigeria. Two objectives were set, the corresponding research questions were answered and a hypothesis was tested in this study. This study adopted descriptive research design using researcher's developed questionnaire as instrument for data collection. A split-half test of reliability was used to determine the reliability of the instrument. Four hundred and eighty women were purposively sampled for the study. The results were analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency count and mean percentages to answer research questions. The inferential statistics of Chi-square was used to test null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The findings show that women of childbearing age knowledge about postnatal care services was very high, but women showed poor willingness to utilization of post natal care services in Edu Local Government Area. This study recommended that Edu LGA health unit, Kwara State and Federal ministries of health and Non-governmental Organizations should strengthen the health education intervention programmes on the promotion of post natal visits and to improve the maternal health awareness on the significant of post natal care services utilization in the existing primary health care centres.

Keywords: Knowledge, Edu Local Government Area, Knowledge and utilization, Post natal care services, Post natal visit, Women of childbearing age, Maternal health services.

INTRODUCTION

Post natal period is a period just after delivery and through the first six weeks of life, this period is recognized as a critical time for both mothers and newborns World Health Organization (WHO, 1999). Postnatal care issues include recovery from childbirth, concerns about newborn care, nutrition, breastfeeding and family planning (WHO, 2005). It has been observed that postnatal care services enable health professionals to identify post-delivery problems and potential complications, as well as to provide treatments promptly (Titaley, Dibley, Agho, Roberts, Hall – Baqui and El-Arifteen, et al, 2008). Despite the benefits of Post Natal Care (PNC) services, most mothers and newborns do not receive postnatal care services from skilled health care

providers during the critical first few days after delivery and this may probably be due to low knowledge of women about PNC services and underutilization of maternal health services available especially PNC services. The large gap in PNC coverage is evident in an analysis by demographic and health surveys in 23 African countries. Approximately one-third of women in sub-Saharan Africa give birth in facilities, and no more than 13 percent receive a postnatal care visit within two days of delivery (Warren, Charlotte 2006). In fact, whether women deliver at home or in a facility, postnatal care services are often found to be very low. Moreover, PNC services, where available, often lack essential elements of care required for the optimum health of the mother and

her newborn. The gap in PNC coverage needs quality health facilities and community actions to reach mothers and babies in the first days after birth.

Although in Nigeria, maternal and child morbidity and mortality are decreasing due to concurrent health actions taking by the governments of all levels and other health agencies, however, the situation are still high, the increase showing maternal mortality ratio of 1:100 higher than the regional average, despite available human and material resources indicating the ugly trends in maternal health situation in Nigeria (FMOH, 2005).

Maternal health services (MHS) utilization particularly post natal care services remains a major challenge in sub-Saharan Africa especially in Nigeria, the rates of maternal mortality (630 per 1,000 live births) and prenatal mortality (88.4 per 1,000 pregnancies) still remain very high (WHO, 2012). The WHO Factsheet (2008) indicated that globally, and particularly in Nigeria, about 80 percent of maternal deaths are due to four major causes such as severe bleeding, infections, hypertensive disorders in pregnancy (eclampsia) and obstructed labour, as complications after unsafe abortion caused 13 percent of maternal deaths.

In Nigeria, mothers and neonates are recommended to receive at least two postnatal health care visits within the period of 0-7 days and 8-28 days after birth (Federal Ministry of Health, 2005). Women of Childbearing Age (WCA) inability to visit post natal clinics (48 hours) following the delivery of the baby in Edu Local Government Area (LGA) have led to so many obstetrics and gynaecological complications that account for many loss of lives after delivery of baby. It was observed that, between January 2014 and June 2015, about twenty-five (25) WCA lost their lives shortly after delivery of life babies in the three districts of Edu Local Government (Edu LGA Health Information Unit, 2015). This loss of lives became worrisome as these conditions are attributed to low level of knowledge about importance of maternal health services particularly visit to health centers 24 to 72 hours after delivery and utilization of post natal care services.

The underutilization of PNC services in health facilities for years in Edu LLGA has contributed to high maternal and infant morbidity and mortality rate among women of childbearing age and this has become a health threat and a challenge not only to population in Edu Local Government Area but to the entire population of Kwara State.

Based on the observed poor maternal and child morbidity and mortality rate among women of childbearing age in Edu LGA, this study assessed knowledge and utilization of post natal care services among WCA in communities of the LGA of Kwara State, Nigeria

Research questions

1. What is the knowledge level of women of child bearing age in Edu Local Government Area (LGA), Kwara State?
2. What is the difference between the knowledge level of women of childbearing age about post natal care services in rural and urban communities of Edu LGA. of Kwara State.
3. What is the difference in willingness of women of childbearing age to utilize post natal care services between rural and urban communities of Edu LGA. of Kwara State.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study adopted descriptive research design to determine the knowledge and utilization of post natal health services among women of childbearing age in Edu Local Government Area of Kwara State. The population for this study consisted of all women of childbearing age in Edu Local Government Area (LGA) of Kwara State, Nigeria. Edu LGA has total population of 201,642, out of which 97,602 were females (National population Census, 2006). The LGA comprises of three traditional districts which has ten (10) political wards with sixty five (65) health facilities located in all communities around the LGA. Eleven (11) out of sixty five (65) health facilities, provided maternal health services among others which did not offer PNC services.

The samples of 480 WCA within the ages of 14 – 49 years who were pregnant or have one or more children, were purposively drawn from 160 households in the three districts of Edu LGA using a multiple stage sampling method. The four-stage (multi stage) sampling procedure was used as follows; six (6) political wards were selected by simple random sampling, that is, two from each of the three district respectively, the selection of households was by systematic sampling and WCA were purposively sampled from these households.

The instrument used was researchers-designed questionnaire which covered various components of postnatal care. The questionnaire was translated into Nupe language (major language spoken) and used as interview schedule for women who could not read nor write in English Language. Section: A- obtained demographic information; section B was close ended type designed in the form of Yes or No while, section C designed in Liker scale type of three (3) Point responses that elicited information on the utilization of PNC services by WCA in Edu Local Government Area of Kwara State. The instrument was scrutinized and reviewed to ensure face and content validity. The reliability of the instrument was determined by pre-testing using split-half test of

Table 1: The Knowledge of Women of Childbearing Age about Post Natal Care Services

N=480 Knowledge about Post Natal Care	Frequency / percentage		
	Yes	No	Not sure
Is it beneficial to visit clinic 24 hours after delivery?	280(58.3%)	96(20.0%)	104(21.7%)
Do you know postnatal care services provided at health centers?	248(51.7)	80(16.7%)	152(31.7%)
Are the following among the services?			
Treatment for pregnancy related problems	264(55.0%)	112(23.3%)	104(21.7%)
Health workers attend to mothers and their babies promptly	336(70.0%)	56(11.7%)	88(18.3%)
Monitoring women health 24 hours after delivery at health centers	320(66.7%)	48(10.0%)	112(23.3%)
Advice mothers on importance of exclusive breast feeding	336(70.0%)	48(10.0%)	96(20.0)
Given Immunization to the baby after delivery	368(76.7%)	32(6.7%)	82(16.7%)
Teach Personal and environmental hygiene	344(71.7%)	40(8.3%)	96(20.0%)
Treatment of post-delivery problem detected	296(61.7%)	56(11.7%)	126(26.7%)

Cronbach statistic of reliability method. The corrected version of the instrument was pre-tested on 50 women of childbearing age in Patigi LGA and the result for the coefficient of reliability was 0.68 using Pearson product correlation.

Data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency count and percentages to answer research questions and inferential statistic of Chi-square was used to test null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The permission for the conduct of this study was obtained from the Edu Local Government Authority and community leaders of the study areas and copy of introductory letter was translated into Nupe language and read to various households and women of childbearing selected to participate for their consent for the study.

RESULTS

Research question 1

What is the knowledge level of women childbearing age about importance of attending postnatal clinic in Edu Local Government area of Kwara State?

Table 1 above revealed a very high knowledge level of WCA about PNC services especially in the areas of importance of health education on exclusive breast feeding, personal and environmental hygiene as well as administration of routine immunization (70%, 71% and 76%) by nurses/midwives in health centers. Although WCA knowledge about other PNC services was

averagely high particularly on the benefits derived from services 24 hours after delivery (58%).

Research question 2

What is the difference between the knowledge level of Women of childbearing age about Post Natal Care Services in Rural and Urban communities of Edu LGA. of Kwara State.

Table 2 shows the knowledge level mean and standard deviation of 64.67 for the urban community and 76.66 for the rural community respectively. This result implies that WCA in rural communities have a little knowledge above women in urban communities in Edu Local Government Area.

Research question 3

Do Women of Childbearing Age Utilize Postnatal Care Services in Edu Local Government Area of Kwara State?

Table 3 below shows a very low level (30.0%) of WCA visit to Post Natal Clinic 24-72 hours following delivery and they demonstrated poor level of exclusive breast feeding to the babies (40.0%), against other PNC services in the LGA. But there was appreciable level of WCA willingness to receive immunization and report any complained on post-partum related problems to health workers for the purpose of receiving treatment in the health center in Edu LGA.

Table 2: Summary of Mean and Standard Deviation Scores on Knowledge of Women of Childbearing Age about Post Natal Care Services

N=480			
Community	M	S.D	Std. Error Mean
Urban community	64.67	33.40	4.31
Rural community	76.66	29.41	3.80

Table 3: The Utilization of Post Natal Care Services among WCA in Edu LGA

Variable	Frequency / percentage		
	Always	Sometimes	Not at All
Post Natal Care Services			
I do you visit health center 24-72hours after delivery?	144(30.0%)	160(33.3%)	296(61.7)
I do report and receive treatment for pregnancy related problems during visit to the clinic?	256(53.3%)	56(11.7%)	42(35.0)
I do ask questions relating to my health during the visit?	256(53.3%)	64(13.3%)	160(33.3%)
Health workers monitor my recovery after labour?	208(43.3%)	48(10.0%)	224(46.7%)
I do give my baby exclusive breast feeding for six months?	192(40.0%)	20(16.7%)	208(43.3%)
I do go for the completion of my immunization and that of your baby?	264(55.0%)	40(8.3%)	176(36.7%)
I do take care of myself and myenvironment?	304(63.3%)	24(5.0%)	152(31.7%)

Table 4: The Summary of Mean and Standard Deviation Scores on the Utilization of Post Natal Care Services among WCA.

N=480			
District	N	M S.D	Std. Error
Urban		53.1839.56	5.11
Rural		36.8631.95	4.74

Research question 4

What is the difference between the knowledge level of Women of childbearing age about Post Natal Care Services in Rural and Urban communities of Edu LGA. of Kwara State

Table 4 above shows the mean scores of 53.18 for urban and 36.86for rural, which implies that utilization of PNCS among the WCA in both urban and rural communities were relatively low. However, WCA in urban communities have higher knowledge level than those in the rural community of Edu LGA of Kwara State.

Ho₁: there is no significant effect of knowledge on the utilization of post natal care services among Women of childbearing age in EduL GA. of Kwara State.

Table 5 shows P value of 0.000 which is less than 0.05 level of significance indicated that the knowledge level of WCA about post natal care services has a significant effect on the utilization of post natal care services among women of childbearing age in Edu LGA, Kwara State. Based on the effect of the women's knowledge on the utilization of PNC services, the null hypothesis which states that women of childbearing age knowledge will have no significant effect on the

Table 5: Chi-Square tests on the Knowledge and Utilization of Post Natal Care Services among WCA

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	77.24	9	.000
N of Valid Cases	480		

P value less than 0.05

willingness of women to utilize post natal care services in Edu LGA is thereby accepted at 0.05 level of significance.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study on the knowledge of WCA about post natal care showed significantly high percentage mean score especially in the areas of personal and environmental hygiene and provision of routine immunization programmes received at the health center. This implied that WCA in both rural and urban communities of Edu Local Government of Kwara State were aware of various post natal care services and their importance. Unfortunately the WCA high knowledge about PNCS does not reflected on their willingness to utilize PNCS provided especially, visits early to post natal clinic (24-72 hours) after delivery. The WCA visits to PNC clinics were very low compared with their level of knowledge.

This study supported Kimberly, Tania, Beaura, and Ousmane (2004) study on KAP of women about maternal health services in Bla; Mali, they observed that over 80 percent of women and household heads interviewed perceive antenatal care to be essential for all women, while, 60 percent of responded claimed that postnatal care was essential for all women. This study further corroborate the study conducted by Adewoye, Musa, Atoyebi and Babatunde (2013) on the knowledge and utilization of antenatal care services among women of childbearing age in Ilorin, which they observed that more than two thirds of the respondents (87.7percent) were aware of antenatal care services before intervention, this implied that women high knowledge about and willingness to utilize ante natal care services, may influence positively their utilization of post natal care services. This study also confirmed the opinions of some scholars that knowledge is a crucial precondition for determining behaviour (Qian and Yue 2002; Rogers 2003; Salma 2004; Sloss and Munier 1991) and theory of reason action by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) which opined that individual attitude toward the behaviour is determined by the person's belief that a given outcome will occur if she/he performs the behaviour and by an

evaluation of the outcome. This finding further agreed with Qi Zhao, Asli, Yi and Biao (2009) study on the attendant of antenatal clinic by women in Shanghai China where women demonstrated a high degree of knowledge about the importance of attending ANC and breastfeeding of babies. In addition, they also found that greater numbers of WCA were very knowledgeable about child immunization (95.8percent). Although 71 per cent agreed that antenatal care is necessary, more than half of the women did not know the first gestational month that determine their first antenatal visit. But this finding is contrary to study by Magadi, Agwanda and Obare, (2007).

On the utilization of post natal care services, WCA demonstrated poor willingness to use PNC services available in health centers. This study recorded poor attendance of post natal clinic 24-72 hours following delivery of baby by WCA in both rural and urban communities; this is not surprising because most women believed that all is well with them shortly after babies are delivered safely. The women's poor willingness to visit PNC will probability not afford WCA the opportunity to report early obstetric complications following delivery of new born babies in the Local Government. This implied that many delivery and post-delivery problems could not be identified early enough for immediate treatment; this lukewarm attitude of women may be responsible for the development of obstetric complications following delivery of babies resulting to high morbidity and mortality rate among mothers and newborn babies in the Local Government. This study supported findings of study by Magadi, Agwanda and Obare, (2007) which opined that use of postnatal care among women are considerably lower in Nigeria than in most African countries. This finding further agree with Charlotte, Pat Daly, Toure and Pyande (2013) that the postnatal period is a neglected period. Despite the fact that the majority of maternal and newborn deaths occur within the first week of the postnatal period, women do attributed the mortality rate to their inability to visit PNCS as recommended.

In conclusion, despite women's high knowledge and the availability of post natal care services, these does not translated into adequate use of post natal care services among WCA as demonstrated by women poor willingness to visit post natal clinics for regular check-up.

The ability of WCA follow-up visit to PNC on regular bases had led to development of obstetrics complications following deliveries and this subsequently claimed life of mothers and most time the newborn babies in the LGA, this ugly trend was supported by the health record of Edu LGA Primary health care department (2015) where fifteen women loss their lives shortly after delivery. Women health education on the significance of regular post natal visit has become necessary to reduce the ugly trends among pregnant women who lose their lives at birth or shortly after delivery of babies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, we recommended the following:-

1. Governments at all levels of health care especially in Edu, Kwara State ministry of health and Non-governmental organizations need to strengthen the existing knowledge –based interventions particularly on post natal care services at primary health care centres in the communities.
2. All sources of information especially the medial houses should be encouraged to air various programmes on the importance of post natal clinic visit for post natal care services to women of childbearing age
3. The Edu LGA should regularly embark on health education intervention programmes especially on the significance of utilization of post natal care services among women of childbearing age in the communities of Edu LGA.

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