

Assessment of Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices of Expectant Mothers in Relation to Antenatal Care in Abha

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ABSTRACT

Background: Antenatal Care (ANC) is the care before birth that include complete screening, treatment, promoting and monitoring of the safety of the mother and fetus.

Objectives: Assessment of knowledge, attitudes and practices of expectant mothers in relation to antenatal care in Abha. **Methods:** This is a cross-sectional questionnaire based study conducted in Abha City from August to October 2017 among 300 expectant women from different parts of Abha city.

Results: Most of the subjects had appropriate knowledge about the importance of ANC visits which resulted in good attitude and practice pattern among the majority of them. The majority of included women had good knowledge about the importance of ANC visits for supplementing women with vitamins and folic acid, giving them information about breast feeding and postpartum care, correct signs of labor, its importance for maintain women and child health, importance of ANC visits for the fetal developmental stages, decreasing the rates of maternal mortality, providing adequate knowledge about the danger symptoms and the complications of pregnancy and the importance of booking, following up and delivering later in the same place that they booked in. **Conclusion:** Most of the women had good knowledge, attitude and practice toward ANC visits.

The majority of the subjects were highly educated thus further large population studies are needed to be conducted all over KSA cities and include rural areas.

Keywords: Knowledge, Attitude, Practice, Expectant mothers, Antenatal care (ANC), Abha, KSA.

INTRODUCTION

Antenatal Care (ANC) is an important step which means care before birth with complete screening, treatment, promoting and monitoring of the safety of the mother and fetus⁽¹⁾. The ANC could provide pregnant women with valuable information and advices that could help them during their pregnancy, delivery and postnatal period to avoid high rates of death that result from inappropriate knowledge about antenatal care^(2, 3). During antenatal period, supplementing pregnant women with folic acid, Calcium and important vitamins as well as providing the mother with care and information could assist the family to overcome pregnancy complications and promotion of breast feeding^(3, 4). Women should visit ANC four times during their pregnancy period which would increase the chance for good skills attendant during the birth time and would increase the health during the longevity as well as management of death rates of the mothers and fetus during birth which was increased to reach 25% of maternal death around the world⁽⁴⁻⁶⁾. Few studies were conducted in KSA to assess the obstacles and conflicts encountered by women including cultural and literacy level^(7, 8). Also, the knowledge of women about the importance of ANC was not sufficient among the majority of them in Saudi Arabia. Thus, the authorities should raise the public awareness of Saudi population toward this issue. The present study aimed at assessing knowledge, attitudes and practices of expectant mothers in relation to antenatal care in Abha.

METHODS

Study design

Across-sectional study included a questionnaire sheet distributed among a random sample of Saudi pregnant females in Abha City from August to October 2017.

Study population and sample size:

The study included a random sample expectant pregnant women aged from 20-35 in Abha region who were interviewed in pharmacists, health care facilities and shopping Malls. Using stratified random sampling technique, 300 pregnant women were enrolled in the presented study.

Study tools

The data were collected after revising the previous studies then the questionnaire was validated and revised by 3 supervisors. The questionnaire was based on previous study carried out in Madina region in KSA⁽⁹⁾ which included questions about the knowledge, attitude and practice pattern of women toward ANC.

Ethical approval

The questionnaire and study design were approved by the experts and the faculty of Medicine. All the enrolled women received informed consent to participate in the study.

Statistical analysis

The data were collected and fed into SPSS (22) for windows. The descriptive data were shown as percentages and variables. Chi-square test was used for assessing the difference between the two groups.

RESULTS

Demographics of the studied subjects

Most of the included women (61%) aged from 28-35 years old and 39% aged from 20-27 years old. All the subjects had college degree (95.7%) while 4.3% only had secondary or primary school. About 61.7% of the subjects had moderate income and 37.75 had high income.

Table (1): Demographic of included women (300)

20-27	117	39
28-35	183	61
College	287	95.7
Secondary or primary School	13	4.3%
Illiterate	0	0
High	113	37.7
Moderate	185	61.7
Low	2	0.06

Assessment of knowledge of included subjects

The knowledge of the included women is presented in Table 1.

All of included women had good knowledge about the importance of ANC visits for supplementing women with vitamins and folic acid, giving them information about breast feeding and postpartum care, correct signs of labor and its importance for maintain women and child health.

Also, the majority of subjects had adequate knowledge about the importance of ANC visits for the fetal developmental stages (88%), decreasing the rates of maternal mortality (92.3%), providing adequate knowledge about the danger symptoms and the complications of pregnancy (71.7%) and the importance of booking, following up and delivering later in the same place that they booked in (88%).

Table (2): Knowledge of expectant women about importance of ANC (300)

Supplementing pregnant women with folic acid, Calcium and important vitamins is a must during ANC visits	300 (100%)	0 (0%)
ANC doctors inform you about the fetal developmental stages	264 (88%)	36 (12%)
ANC visits could decrease the rates of maternal mortality	277 (92.3%)	23(7.7%)
ANC visits gives you information about danger symptoms and the proper complications	215(71.7%)	85(28.3%)
ANC visits gives you information about correct pain or labor signs	300(100%)	0(0%)
ANC visits gives you information about breast feeding and postpartum care and exercises	300(100%)	0 (0%)
Regular visits for ANC are important for yourself and your child health	300 (100 %)	0 (0%)
It is important to book, follow up and deliver later in the same place that you were booked in.	264(88 %)	36 (12%)

Level of knowledge among respondents

The majority of women had appropriate knowledge about the importance of ANC visits (92.3%) (Table 3).

Table (3): Respondents' knowledge about ANC visits

Knowledge level	Frequency	Percent (%)
Good	277	92.3
Poor	23	7.7

- Evaluating the subject's attitude

All the subjects had positive attitude toward seeking ANC for pregnancy complication and regular follow up during their pregnancy period. Also, most of women thought that their family would support their visits to ANC during pregnancy (70.3%) (Table 4).

Table (4): Attitude toward ANC visits (n=300)

Would you seek for ANC for any pregnancy complications?	No.	Percentage (%)
Yes	300	100
No	0	0
Would you follow regular ANC visits during your pregnancy period?		
Yes	300	100
No	0	0
Do you think that your family or the society		
Yes	211	70.3
No	89	29.7

Attitude score among respondents

The attitude score was positive among most of the subjects (90.3%) and was negative among only 9.7% of the included women (Table 5).

Table (5): women’s attitude score

Attitude level	Frequency	Percent (%)
Good	271	90.3
Poor	29	9.7

Practice pattern of included subjects

The participants’ practice is shown in Table. 6. The level of practice was sufficient among the majority of included women toward following up and delivering in the same place (67%). All of the subjects followed ANC service during their pregnancy and seek for ANC if they experience any pregnancy complications.

Table (6): practice pattern toward ANC visits (n=300)

Have you followed ANC service?	300 (100%)	0 (0%)
If you experience abortion or other pregnancy complication, I seek ANC.	300 (100%)	0 (0%)
I followed up and delivered later in the same place that I booked in	201 (67%)	99 (33%)

Level of practice among respondents

The practice pattern was good among 89% of the subjects while only 11% had low practice score toward ANC visits (Table. 7).

Table (7): Respondents’ practice score

Practice score	Frequency	Percent (%)
Good	267	89
Poor	33	11

DISCUSSION

The annual incidence of maternal death rates was estimated to reach 529 thousand women around the world thus, antenatal care is a corner stone for maintain women and child health as well as prevention of high prevalence of maternal death⁽¹⁰⁾.

The antenatal knowledge scores of women in KSA were found to be below the average^(8, 9). In contrast to these results, the present study showed a high level of knowledge which in turn resulted in positive attitude and high practice pattern among Saudi women⁽¹¹⁾.

These results could be attributed to that the majority of the subjects were highly educated, thus they showed a proper KAP toward ANC visits and this was also shown in other studies^(12, 13).

Consistent studies showed a low level of unawareness about the importance of antenatal care visits and programs in Egypt⁽¹⁴⁾, Libya⁽¹⁵⁾ and South West Ethiopia⁽¹⁶⁾.

This study has some limitations as the practice pattern was self-reported by the most and the majority of women were highly educated which don’t represent the whole population in Abha city.

CONCLUSION

Most of the women had good knowledge, attitude and practice toward ANC visits. The majority of the subjects were highly educated thus further large population studies are needed to be conducted all over KSA cities and include rural areas.

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