



A study to assess the utilization of Maternal and Child Health Services among mothers of the infants in rural area of Ahmednagar district

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Abstract: Background of the study: Women play a crucial role in nurturing children and shaping the future of their communities and nations. In India, women constitute 48.47% of the population, with approximately 22.2% in their reproductive years. The lack of accessible maternal health care (MHC) services not only jeopardizes women's well-being but also results in significant losses for families and society as a whole. This study mainly deals with the assess the utilization of Maternal and Child Health Services among mothers of the infants in rural area of Ahmednagar district. **Objectives:** 1. To assess the utilization Maternal and Child Health services by the mothers of infants. 2. To find out the association of socio-demographic variables with the utilization of Maternal and Child Health services. **Methodology:** Cross sectional survey approach was used for the present study. Simple random sampling was used for selection of sub center of Rahata taluqa and systematic random samling was used for selection of sample. **Result:** Majority of mothers received antenatal, intra-natal and post-natal MCH services. There is non-significant association of utilization of maternal and child health services with the socio-demographic variables. **Conclusion:** Utilization of MCH services indicate healthy mother and child

Key words: Utilization, Maternal & child health (MCH) Services, Mother, Infant

INTRODUCTION

Women play a crucial role in nurturing children and shaping the future of their communities and nations. In India, women constitute 48.47% of the population, with approximately 22.2% in their reproductive years¹. However, due to the inherent risks associated with childbirth, women are classified as a vulnerable group in urgent need of

healthcare services². The lack of accessible maternal health care (MHC) services not only jeopardizes women's well-being but also results in significant losses for families and society as a whole. In 2019, UNICEF highlighted that globally, 2.4 million children died within their first month of life, predominantly in Sub-Saharan African and South-Asian countries³. This underscores the critical importance of improving maternal health services to ensure better outcomes for both mothers and newborns. In India, where approximately 26% of the population consists of women of reproductive age⁴, enhancing the utilization of maternal health services is essential. Disparities in education, economic status, autonomy, and urban-rural residence contribute significantly to the inequality in service utilization among women. Antenatal care (ANC) services serve as a vital gateway to subsequent delivery and postnatal care (PNC), emphasizing the need for strategies aimed at improving educational opportunities, economic empowerment, and overall autonomy among women. Empowering women through improved access to maternal health services is not just a health imperative but also a socioeconomic necessity. By addressing these disparities and enhancing service utilization, societies can secure a healthier future for mothers, children, and the entire community.

Objectives of the study

1. To assess the utilization Maternal and Child Health services by themothers of infants
2. To find out the association of socio-demographic variables with the utilization of Maternal and Child Health services.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

A cross sectional study was carried out in between June to July, 2021 in the rural areas of district Ahmednagar, India. The list of all sub centers, primary health centers and community health centers was obtained from the Taluka Health Officer, Rahata, Ahmednagar. Selection of sub centers were done by lottery method of simple random sampling. Selection of sample done by systematic random sampling. Postnatal women, who had one or more children up to one year of age from rural area of district Ahmednagar was included as the sampling unit. For the purpose of this study, the criteria for utilization of Maternal and Child Health Services was at least 3 Antenatal visits with antenatal registration, tetanus toxoid and 100 IFA.

Inclusion Criteria

- Both primi and multi para mothers having up to one year old children
- Age group between 22-45 years of age.
- The mothers who were willing to participate

Exclusion Criteria

- Not willing to participate.

- Mothers who were known case of mental illness.

Data collection Tools & techniques:

The questionnaire for the survey was prepared on the basis of extensive literature and was validated by 5 experts. The questionnaire was composed of two sections- Section A & B. Section A consist of socio-demographic and maternal variables. , Section B consist of questions related to utilization of maternal and child services.

Data processing and analysis

In selected sub centers by lottery method survey was carried out for eligible mothers and after numbering of eligible mothers selection were done and from them selection were done by systematic sampling. Data collection done by interview method and Data entry and analysis was done in Microsoft excel. The results of quantitative data have been presented in the result section with appropriate tables, bars and diagrams. Quantitative findings have been analyzed in accordance with the distribution of data. Descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution was calculated to describe the demographic characteristics of the sample population and chi square test was used for the association. Chi square test was done with help of social science statistics.

Ethical consideration

Approval was taken from Research Ethical Committee of Pravara Institute of Medical Sciences. Permission was taken from the Taluka Health Officer. Purpose of study was explained to individual participants and informed consent was taken before administration of the questionnaire. Confidentiality of was maintained and the data were used only for research purpose.

RESULTS: The data was collected from 200 eligible mothers who fulfill criteria of selection. Collected data was analyzed as per study objectives findings of the study were as follows.

Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents

Majority of study participant 38 %were in the age group of 24-30 years of age, followed by 27 % in the age group of 18-24 years of age.

Majority study participants 76 % were from rural area, 21% from semi urban area.

Majority of women under study was in age group of 26-30(48.8) and only (.8%) women were in the age group of <20

Majority of study participant 92 % age group at marriage was between 20-26 years of age.

Majority of the study participant 42 % were educated up to higher secondary education followed by 21 % were secondary education and 9 % were graduate and post graduated

Majority of study participant 71% were house wife and majority of the study participant 55 % were from joint family

Majority of study participant 37 % family income was 7000-10000 / month and majority of study participants 94 % were from Hindu religion.

Majority of study participant 46% were having 1-2 children's.

Utilization of services during antenatal period: 93.50 % of mothers registered for the ANC care within the first three months of pregnancy and 06.50% registered after the 03 months. majority of the mothers received the care through the government public health services through ANM and ASHA of respective sub center. 85 % of mothers completed 3 and more visits were as 15 % mothers completed less than three visit. Majority of 83 % percent mothers started folic acid tablet after detection of pregnancy and 17 % percent mothers were started folic acid tablet before the pregnancy. Majority of mothers continued with iron folic acid supplementation up to 7 months of pregnancy. 100% mothers were vaccinated for TT vaccination.

Utilization of Intra-natal care services by mothers of the infants:

Among study participant 100% were underwent institutional delivery in public health unit and private hospital. Among them 89 % were underwent normal vaginal delivery and 11 % had caesarian section. 3 % of caesarian section delivery mothers underwent tubectomy permanent method of family planning. Among 89 % normal vaginal delivery mothers 6% chosen copper T as family planning device.

Utilization of Postnatal care services by the mothers of the infants:

After discharge from the public hospital and private hospital 78% of mothers done their follow up in second week & 38% in third week after discharge. 11% of postnatal mothers continued with the iron folic acid tablets and supplementary medicine. 65% of mothers continued with the weaning practice after 6 months age of child. Temporary method of contraception were used by the maximum participant.

Association of utilization of maternal and child services with socio-demographic variables of mothers: Chi square test of association shows that there is non-significant association of utilization of maternal and child services with socio-demographic variables of mothers

Discussion

Present study findings shows that 93.50 % of mothers registered for the ANC care within the first three months of pregnancy and 06.50% registered after the 03 months.

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Above findings shows that early registration of pregnancy ANM & ASHA visits and IFA supplementation is high. Study population is literate and mainly residing in catchment area of health services. The population is served by private and public health services and active peripheral health services through Middle level health provider, ANM and ASHA. The population is served by Medical college served by Pravara Medical trust.

These study findings were supported by study carried out by Amanpreet Kaur et al. A study to assess the utilization of Maternal and Child Health Services among mothers of the infants in rural area of district Sirmour, H.P, India. ⁵

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Above study findings are in consistent with the article published in The New Indian Express shows that Three states, including Telangana and Tamil Nadu, and two union territories, reported hundred per cent institutional deliveries in 2021-22, while nine states, including Karnataka, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, and Maharashtra, saw over 99 per cent births in institutes. ⁶

Summary and conclusion: Utilization of maternal and child health services by mothers in India is a critical issue with various facets to consider. Despite efforts to improve accessibility and quality of healthcare services, several challenges persist, affecting the overall utilization rates. While there have been improvements in the utilization of maternal and child health services in India, significant challenges remain. Addressing these challenges requires a multi-faceted approach involving policy reforms, infrastructure development, community engagement, and continuous monitoring to ensure that all mothers and children have access to essential healthcare services regardless of their socio-economic status or geographical location

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