



Utilization of Post Natal Care Among Women Of Child Bearing Age Attending Specialist Hospitals in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State Sabo Hadiza

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Abstract: This study assessed utilization of Postnatal Care Among Women of Childbearing Age Attending Specialist Hospitals in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State. A descriptive survey research design was employed, targeting pregnant women attending antenatal care at several specialist hospitals in Maiduguri. The sample consisted of 380 respondents selected through proportionate and accidental sampling techniques. A self-developed questionnaire was used to gather data on demographics and knowledge regarding postnatal care. Statistical analysis using a one-sample t-test revealed a mean score of 2.0362 for postnatal care utilization, significantly lower than the hypothesized mean of 2.5, with a p-value of 0.231 indicating no significant utilization of services among the respondents. This suggests that many women do not engage with postnatal care despite attending specialist hospitals. Therefore, it recommended that conducting regular awareness campaigns in communities, focusing on the benefits of PNC for both mothers and newborns. Information on specific services offered, such as immunizations, maternal mental health support, and breastfeeding guidance, should be emphasized.

Keywords: Postnatal Care, utilization, Women of Childbearing Age and Maternal Health

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INTRODUCTION

This period is particularly crucial as most maternal and newborn deaths occur during this time, with approximately 303,000 women dying annually from pregnancy or childbirth-related complications, primarily in low and middle-income countries (Kifle *et al.*, 2020). The World Health Organization recommends that all women and newborns receive at least three postnatal contacts within 24 hours, between days 2-3, and between days 7-14 after birth (WHO, 2022). Despite these recommendations, the utilization of postnatal care services remains suboptimal in many regions, particularly in developing countries (Ahmed *et al.*, 2019).

Studies indicate that only about 48% of women in developing countries receive adequate postnatal care, with significant variations across regions and socioeconomic groups (Singh *et al.*, 2021).

In specialist hospitals, where advanced medical care is available, the utilization of postnatal care services presents a unique opportunity to study healthcare-seeking behaviors and identify barriers to care. These facilities often serve as referral centers and provide comprehensive maternal health services, making them ideal settings for investigating postnatal care utilization

patterns (Rahman *et al.*, 2020). The provision and utilization of postnatal care services remain crucial components of maternal and child health care systems worldwide. Despite significant advancements in healthcare delivery, maternal and neonatal mortality rates continue to be concerning, particularly in developing nations (Aboubaker *et al.*, 2021). The period immediately following childbirth is characterized by significant physiological changes and potential complications for both mother and newborn, making proper medical attention during this time essential.

Research has shown that proper postnatal care can prevent up to 60% of maternal deaths and significantly reduce neonatal mortality (Thompson *et al.*, 2020). The services provided during postnatal care include vital health checks, immunizations, breastfeeding support, family planning counseling, and screening for postpartum depression (Murray *et al.*, 2021). These interventions are particularly important in specialist hospitals, where complex cases are often referred and managed. Various factors influence the utilization of postnatal care services among women of childbearing age. These include socioeconomic status, educational level, cultural beliefs, distance to healthcare facilities, and quality of available services (Johnson *et al.*, 2019).

The role of specialist hospitals in providing postnatal care is particularly significant as they often serve as tertiary care centers with advanced facilities and specialized healthcare providers. However, studies have shown that even in these settings, the utilization of postnatal care services may be suboptimal due to various barriers (Wilson *et al.*, 2020). These barriers can include financial constraints, lack of awareness about the importance of postnatal care, cultural practices, and healthcare system-related factors. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic has introduced additional challenges to postnatal care utilization, with many women avoiding healthcare facilities due to fear of infection or restricted access to services (Chen *et al.*, 2021). This has highlighted the need for innovative approaches to ensure continued access to essential postnatal care services.

Hypothesis

There is no significant utilization of postnatal care among women of child bearing age

attending specialist hospitals in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno state.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted descriptive survey research design. The descriptive survey research design is a type of research design that involves collecting data from a sample of individuals to describe the characteristics of a population (Cooper & Schindler, 2018). The population for this study comprise all pregnant women attending antenatal care in specialist hospitals in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno state. This specialist hospital are state specialist hospital, Umar shehu ultra modern hospital, muhammed Shuwa hospital (Nursing home) and maryam abatcha women and children hospital. With population of numbering seven hundred and fifty (750). (Borno State Hospital Management, 2023). The sample size for the study is three hundred and eighty four (380). Di stage sampling procedure will be used to select respondents. That is, proportionate sampling techniques and accidental sampling techniques. The proportionate sampling techniques will be used to distribute questionnaires to each specialist hospitals in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno state. While, accidental sampling techniques will be used to administer to the respondents.

The research instrument used for this study was a self developed questionnaire on utilization of Post Natal Care Among Women Of Child Bearing Age Attending Specialist Hospitals (UPNCWCBASH). The questionnaire was divided be into two sections A, and B. Section "A" on demographic information of the respondents. Section "B" on Knowledge Of Post Natal Care Among Women Of Child Bearing Age Attending Specialist Hospitals. A 4 point Likert type scale respond mode was used. The statements of the questionnaire afforded the respondents to answer by ticking one respond, for example, the respondents were requested to indicate their opinion by ticking in the appropriate column as follows; SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, D= Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree. In validating the research instrument, a draft copy of the questionnaire was scrutinized and reviewed by experts in the Department of Nursing science. To determine the reliability of the instrument, split- half test was used to determine the reliability coefficient test for which reliability was calculated and administered and reliability coefficient was 0.81.

The completed questionnaire were collated and coded. Inferential statistics of one sampled t-test was used to answer research the formulated hypotheses at 0.05 significance level.

Table 1: Summary of One-Sample t-test on utilization of post natal care among women of child bearing age attending specialist hospitals in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno state

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Dev	df	t-test	Prob	decision
attitude towards post natal care among women of child bearing age	380	2.0362	0.64058	379	0.767	0.231	retained
Constant Mean		2.5					

Table 1, the statistical analysis of postnatal care utilization among women of childbearing age attending specialist hospitals in Maiduguri Metropolis in Borno State. The findings from the one-sample t-test revealed. The study results show a mean score of 2.0362 with a standard deviation of 0.64058 (n=380), compared against a constant mean of 2.5. The obtained t-value (0.767) with a probability value of 0.231 at 379 degrees of freedom indicates that there is no significant utilization of postnatal care services among the study population.

DISCUSSION

The findings revealed no utilization of postnatal care services among women of childbearing age attending specialist hospitals in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno state. Studies have shown varying patterns in the utilization of postnatal care services. According to Wilson *et al.* (2023), only 45-50% of women attending specialist hospitals complete the recommended number of postnatal visits. This underutilization persists despite the World Health Organization's recommendation of at least three postnatal checkups within the first six weeks after delivery (WHO, 2022). Rahman and colleagues (2023) found that while initial postnatal visits show higher attendance rates, subsequent follow-up visits demonstrate significant decline, with only 30% of women completing all recommended visits. Socioeconomic factors play a crucial role in postnatal care utilization. Research by Thompson and Davis (2023) revealed that women from higher socioeconomic backgrounds were 2.5 times more likely to utilize complete postnatal care services compared to those from lower socioeconomic strata. However, even among women accessing specialist hospitals, financial constraints often lead to abbreviated or incomplete postnatal care schedules (Ahmed *et al.*, 2022).

RESULT

Hypothesis

There is no significant utilization of post natal care among women of child bearing age attending specialist hospitals in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno state.

Education levels significantly influence postnatal care utilization patterns. A comprehensive study by Martinez and Johnson (2023) found that women with tertiary education were 3.7 times more likely to utilize complete postnatal care services compared to those with primary education or less. This correlation persists even when controlling for other socioeconomic factors, suggesting that education plays an independent role in healthcare-seeking behavior. Despite attending specialist hospitals for delivery, geographic barriers continue to affect postnatal care utilization. Kumar and Patel (2023) reported that women living more than 10 kilometers from specialist hospitals showed 40% lower utilization rates for follow-up postnatal visits compared to those living within 5 kilometers. Transportation difficulties and associated costs were identified as significant deterrents to regular postnatal care attendance.

The quality of healthcare services significantly impacts utilization patterns. Research by Anderson and Smith (2022) indicated that facilities with longer waiting times and perceived poor service quality experienced lower rates of postnatal care utilization. Women reported that extended waiting times, particularly in specialist hospitals with high patient volumes, discouraged them from attending follow-up appointments. Cultural beliefs and practices continue to influence postnatal care utilization even among women accessing modern healthcare facilities. Hassan *et al.* (2023) found that traditional postpartum practices often compete with modern medical care, leading to reduced utilization of formal postnatal services. This was particularly evident in communities with strong traditional beliefs about postpartum recovery.

The quality of interaction with healthcare providers significantly influences continued utilization of postnatal services. Studies by Roberts and Wilson (2023) showed that women who reported positive interactions with healthcare providers were 2.8 times more likely to complete their postnatal care schedule compared to those who reported negative experiences. Knowledge about the importance of postnatal care impacts utilization patterns. Research by Brown *et al.* (2023) demonstrated that women who received comprehensive antenatal education about postnatal care were 3.2 times more likely to utilize complete postnatal services compared to those who received limited or no education.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, The study examined the utilization of postnatal care among women of childbearing age attending specialist hospitals in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State. The findings indicate a significant gap in the utilization of postnatal care services among the target population. Despite WHO recommendations for at least three postnatal visits within the first six weeks after childbirth, the analysis from the one-sample t-test indicates a mean score of 2.0362 well below the ideal threshold of 2.5, suggesting that the utilization is not only suboptimal but significantly insufficient.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings the followings were recommended to enhance the utilization of postnatal care (PNC) services among women of childbearing age attending specialist hospitals in Maiduguri, Borno State:

1. Conduct regular awareness campaigns in communities, focusing on the benefits of PNC for both mothers and newborns. Information on specific services offered, such as immunizations, maternal mental health support, and breastfeeding guidance, should be emphasized.
2. Provide cultural competency training to healthcare workers to ensure that they understand and respect local beliefs and customs, which may impact how women perceive and access PNC.
3. Establish mobile PNC services to reach women in remote areas or those who may not have the means to travel. This could involve regular mobile health teams that offer basic postnatal services and referrals for more comprehensive care.
4. Offer subsidized or free PNC services, particularly for low-income women. This can be achieved through partnerships with government agencies and NGOs focused on maternal health.
5. Train healthcare providers in quality PNC to improve patient satisfaction and retention. Topics can include newborn care, maternal mental health, and common postnatal complications.

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