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Factors Contributing to Low Utilization of Postnatal Services among Mothers at Maternal and Child Health Clinic Kampala International University Teaching Hospital Bushenyi

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ABSTRACT

The postnatal is defined by the World Health Organization as the period beginning one hour after delivery of the placenta and continuing until six weeks after the birth of an infant. To determine the socio-economic factors associated with low utilization of postnatal care services at KIUTH. Also to identify cultural factors associated with low utilization of postnatal care services at KIUTH. In other words, to find out hospital facility-related factors associated with low utilization of postnatal care services at KIUTH. A cross-sectional hospital-based study design was used to conduct the study among 140 mothers attending maternal and child health clinics in Kampala International University Teaching Hospital during the study period and only those who consent to participate in the study. The results indicated that the majority of the participants 66(47.1%) were between 21 and 30 years old and most of them 58(41.4%) attained school up to secondary level. A high proportion of 120(85.7%) of the participants were married and the majority 75(53.6%) were farmers. Furthermore, the majority of the participants 70(50%) said that their husbands were not supportive of them and also most of them were moving a distance of between 1 and 2 Kilometers from home to the health facilities. From the results, the government should increase the staffing of health units such that mothers can be encouraged to attend postnatal care services. Health workers should do more health education to mothers, especially during their antenatal visits about the need for earlier attending postnatal care services after delivery. Mothers who deliver from health centers should be encouraged to attend post-natal care services and they can be encouraged to bring their husbands so that they both can be health educated about the health of the mother and the child. The government should use mass media like radios, and televisions to encourage mothers to utilize postnatal services in increased numbers.

Keywords: Mothers, Postnatal Care, Health Education, antenatal care.

INTRODUCTION

Postnatal is defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as the period beginning one hour after delivery of the placenta and continuing until six weeks (42 days) after the birth of an infant [1]. According to WHO, each year 287,000 women die from complications related to pregnancy and childbirth, and about 99% of these deaths occur in developing countries [2]. The first hours, days, and weeks after childbirth are dangerous times for both the mother and newborn infant [3-5]. Globally, there were an estimated 272, 000 maternal deaths from complications related to pregnancy and childbirth in 2014, which is a decline of 45.1% from 1990 [6]. Majority of the maternal deaths occur in developing regions [7-10]. Among the developing regions, the sub-Saharan Africa region alone accounted for 62% (179 000) of global deaths followed by Southern Asia at 24% (69 000). The global maternal mortality rate (MMR) in 2013 was 210 maternal deaths per 100 000 live births, down from 380 maternal deaths per 100 000 live births in 1990. The MMR in developing regions (230) was 14 times higher than in developed regions [11]. Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest regional MMR (510) per 100,000 live births. The maternal mortality ratio in Ethiopia is also among the highest in the World [11]. According to Osrin *et al.* [6] who conducted a study in Nepal, two-

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thirds of all neonatal deaths arise from such complications (asphyxia and severe infections, while inappropriate feeding and cultural practices during the postnatal period may pose further risks to the life of the newborn. All these maternal and neonatal problems could be reduced if women receive appropriate postnatal care [1]. In Uganda, Izudi and Amongin [11] who conducted a study in Soroti, Eastern Uganda at nine health facilities found that among 357 women (respondents) aged 15–49 years who had delivered in the previous year (but 1 week ago) and were enrolled at postnatal care clinics, only 55 (15.4%) used Early Postnatal Care (EPNC) services. EPNC attendance was significantly associated with formal employment and education about postnatal care schedules. Women at public health facilities were significantly less likely to have attended EPNC than were those at private facilities. An increase in the length of hospitalization by one day was associated with reduced EPNC utilization. They, therefore, concluded that EPNC was poorly utilized and prioritized. Its use was hindered by protracted hospitalization, care provision at public facilities, maternal unemployment or self-employment, and lack of information. In a similar study by Nabukera *et al.* [12] who conducted a study in Uganda, the timing of postnatal care is also crucial to the well-being of the mother and baby. According to WHO [2], about 50% of maternal deaths and 40% of neonatal deaths occur within 24 hours after birth, also known as the ‘immediate postnatal period’. Thus it is clear that the first 24 hours after birth is a crucial time to intervene so that any problems can be identified promptly and appropriate intervention can take place. For this reason, the World Health Organization recommends that mothers receive postnatal care within the first 24 hours followed by a postnatal check on the second or third day, and then on the seventh day after delivery [2]. Postnatal care is crucial in maintaining and promoting the health of the woman and the newborn baby while providing an opportunity for health professionals to identify, monitor and manage health conditions that may develop in the mother and newborn during the postnatal period. According to the World Health Organization (WHO) 2012 report, 8200 maternal deaths occurred in Uganda in 2011. The 2013 Uganda Demographic Health Survey (UDHS) showed that the maternal mortality ratio was 676 deaths per 100,000 live births [12]. Most maternal and neonatal deaths occur during childbirth and the postpartum period [12]. The utilization of maternal health care services reduces maternal and child mortality and improves the reproductive health outcome of women [14, 15]. Postnatal care (PNC), in particular, prevents the great majority of maternal and child morbidity and mortality [16, 17]. PNC services enable health professionals to identify post-delivery problems including potential complications and to provide treatments promptly. Therefore, it is important for both the mothers’ and the child’s health in preventing short-term and long-term complications and deaths arising from delivery. Postnatal care is not only the means to treating complications arising from the delivery, but also providing the mother with important information on how to care for herself and her newborn baby [18]. Even though postnatal care service utilization plays an important role in reducing maternal and newborn child mortality, little is known about the factors contributing to the low utilization of postnatal services. This study therefore aimed at identifying factors contributing to the low utilization of postnatal services by mothers at the Antenatal Clinic in Kampala International University Teaching Hospital (KIUTH), Bushenyi, Uganda.

Aim

To establish the factors contributing to low- utilization of postnatal services among mothers at maternal and child health clinic Kampala International University Teaching Hospital, Bushenyi.

Specific Objectives

- To determine the socio-economic factors associated with low utilization of post-natal care services at KIUTH.
- To identify cultural factors associated with low utilization of postnatal care services at KIUTH.
- To find out hospital facility-related factors associated with low utilization of postnatal care services at KIUTH.

Research Questions

- What are the socio-economic factors associated with low utilization of post-natal care services at KIUTH?
- What are the cultural factors associated with low utilization of postnatal care services at KIUTH?
- What are hospital facility-related factors associated with low utilization of post-natal care services at KIUTH?

METHODOLOGY

Study Design

A cross-sectional hospital-based study design was used to conduct the study.

Area of Study

The study was conducted in the maternal and child health clinic, Kampala International University Teaching Hospital-Ishaka town, Bushenyi district in western Uganda. KIUTH is a private hospital with specialized clinics including the ANC/MCH among others. It also comprises of inpatient departments like the surgical, medical,

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pediatrics, and private wards. It is located approximately 100 m north of the junction of the Ntungamo-Kasese Road with the Mbarara-Ishaka Road. Its location is approximately 77 kilometers (48 miles), by road, west of Mbarara, the largest city in the sub-region. This location lies approximately 360 kilometers (224 miles), by road, southwest of Kampala, the capital of Uganda and the largest city in that country. The coordinates of Ishaka-Bushenyi Municipality are: 0° 32' 40.00"N, 30° 8' 16.00"E (Latitude:-0.544445; Longitude: 30.137778)

Study Population

The study included all mothers attending maternal and child health clinics in Kampala International University Teaching Hospital during the study period and only those who consent to participate in the study.

Sample size determination

The sample size of the study was determined using the statistical formula below

$$N = \frac{ZX^2P(1-P)}{d^2} \text{ (Swinscow, 1976).}$$

N= Sample required

P= proportion of postnatal mothers to the total attendees at the facility (KIUTH) 10%

ZX= Level of significance (1.96) for confidence interval 95%

d= standard error of deviation = 0.05

$$N = \frac{1.96^2 \times 0.1(1-0.1)}{0.05^2}$$

N= 138 (0 decimal places, by the calculator)

Therefore, 140 participants were selected for the study (the 2 participants added will cater for any errors).

Sampling technique

Convenience sampling was used in this study because mothers were coming to the facility (a convenient place) where the researcher could easily access them. Mothers also were coming to the facility at different time intervals. This technique also helped the researcher to gather data quickly as time is so limited for the study.

Inclusion criteria

All postnatal mothers attending maternal and child health clinic at Kampala International University Teaching Hospital during the time of study and who consent to participate.

Exclusion criteria

All postnatal mothers attending maternal and child health clinic at Kampala International University Teaching Hospital during the time of study and who did not consent to participate.

Dependent variables

Low utilization of postnatal services among mothers is the dependent variable of the study.

Independent variable

Socio-economic, cultural, and hospital facility-based factors are the independent variables of the study

Data collection tools

Questionnaires, calculators, pens, and record entry sheets were used to collect data for the study.

Data collection procedure

The participants filled out structured questionnaires. After this, the data was collected and computed in order to come up with comprehensive data for analysis.

Data analysis

The researcher employed both qualitative and quantitative techniques in data analysis. The information gathered from the data will enable exploratory data analysis using descriptive statistics. The findings will be presented in frequency counts, score tables with varying percentages calculated, and charts.

Ethical consideration

Purpose of the study was explained to all eligible respondents and consent sought before any enrolment for the study. Results were kept confidential. Participants' names were not used for identification but initials and or numbers only. Approval to carry out the study was obtained from the Research Committee School of Allied Health Sciences of Kampala international university- Western campus. Participation in the study is purely voluntary was emphasized.

Quality assurance and quality control

A pre-tested questionnaire was used. Rigorous data management was employed (crosschecking and validating forms and data entry). Training and orientation of research assistants to ensure competence in their roles, they will also be trained on research ethics and the importance of maintaining confidentiality.

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RESULTS

Socio-economic factors associated with low utilization of post-natal care

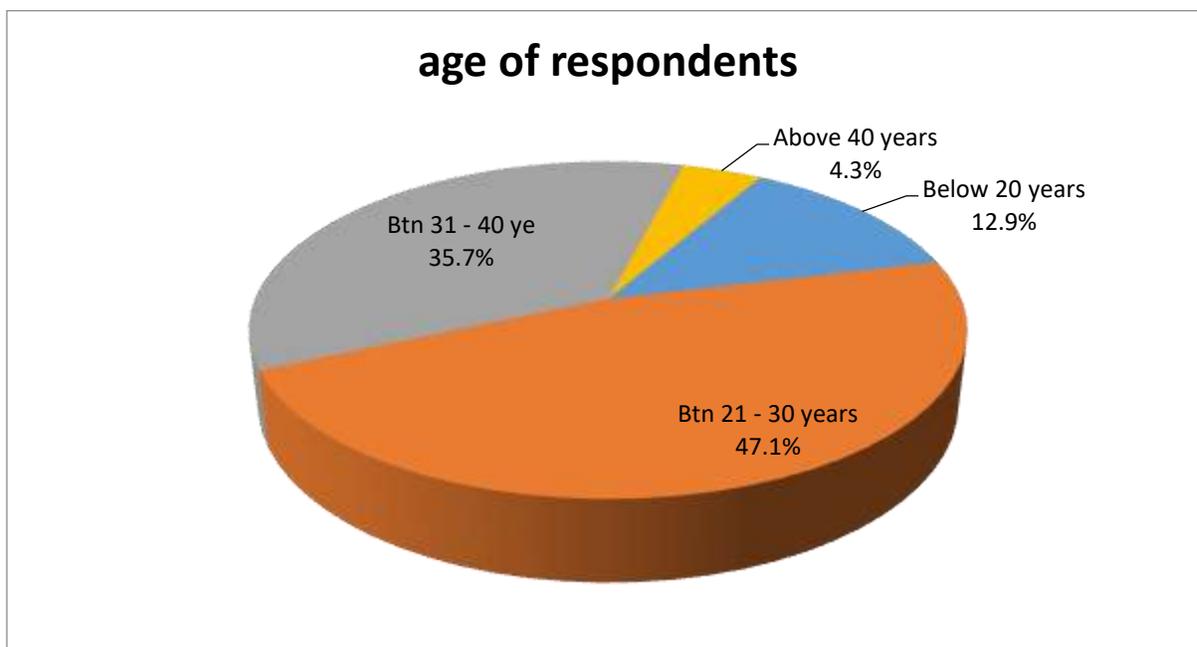


Figure 1: From the study conducted out of the 140 respondents who participated in the study, 18(12.9%) were below 20 years, 66(47.1%) respondents were between 21 to 30 years, 50 (35.7%) were between 31 to 40 years while only 6(4.3%) were above 40 years.

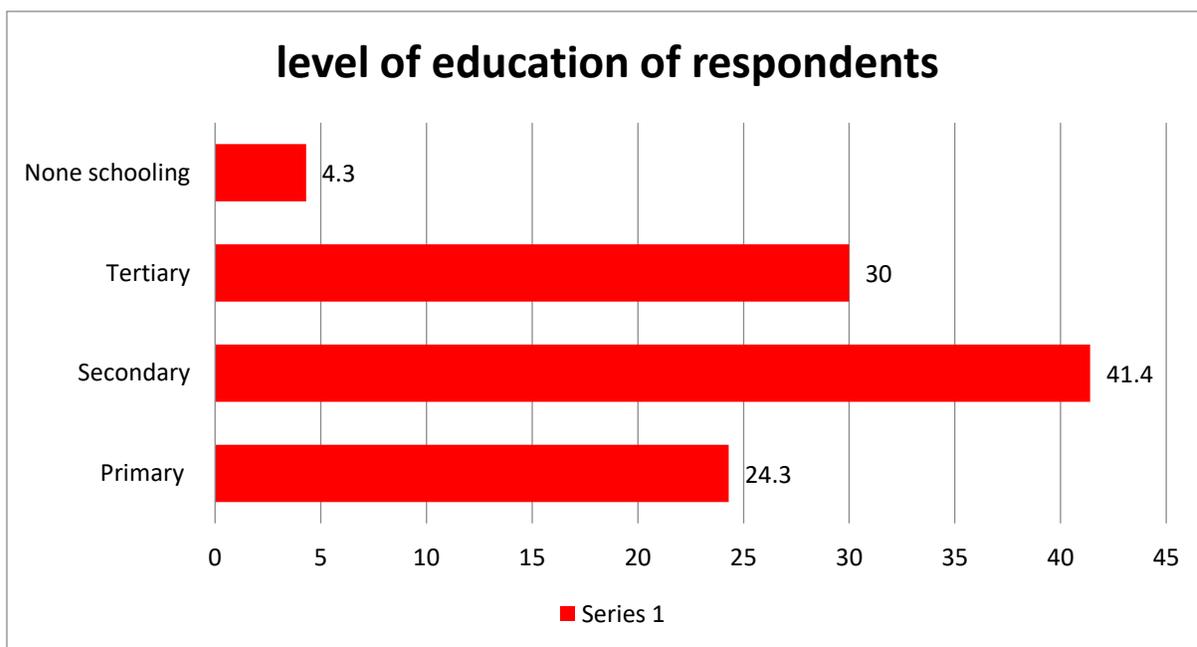


Figure 2: Also from the study conducted, out of the 140 respondents 24 (24.3%) respondents had a primary level of education, 58 (41.4%) respondents had studied a secondary level of education, 42(30%) respondents

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had acquired tertiary education while only 6(4.3%) had covered any formal education schooling. The mother's level of education has an important impact on seeking post-natal care services, especially from rural-based deliveries.

Therefore, improving educational opportunities for women may have a large impact on improving the use of such services.

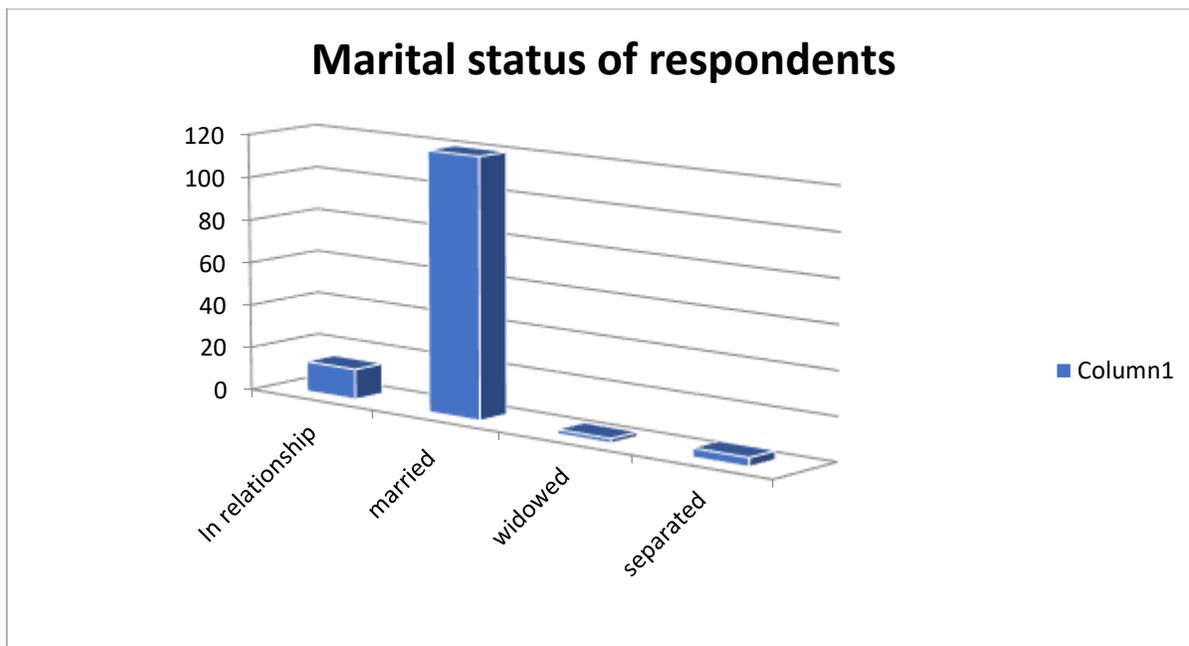
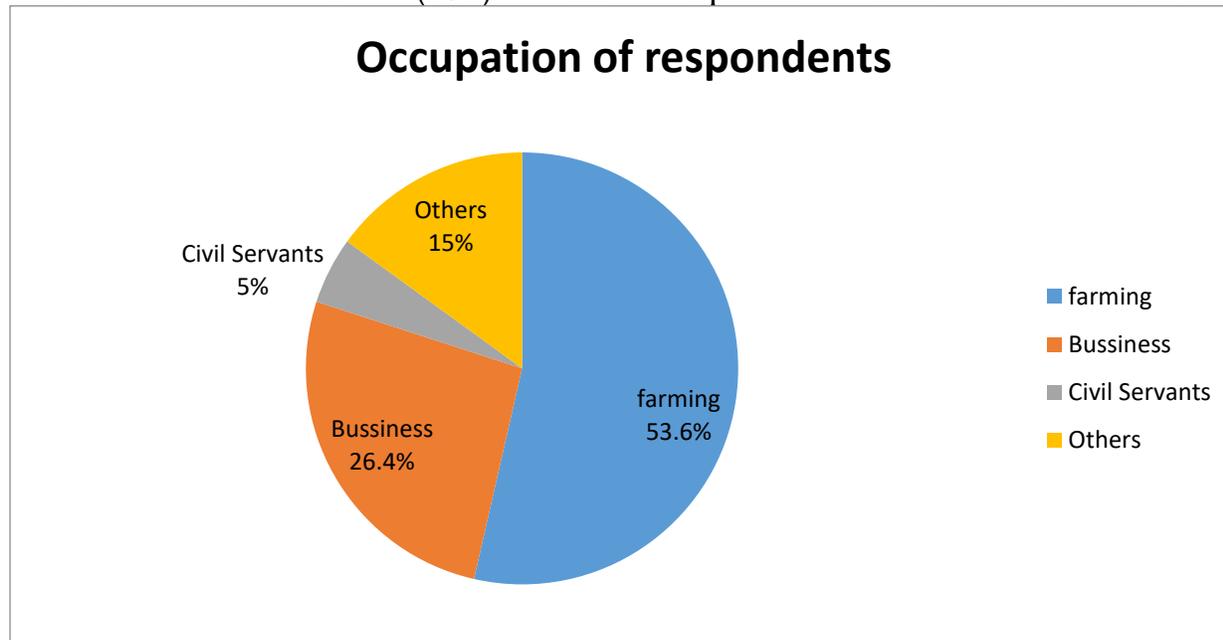


Figure 3: The study also indicated that out of the 140 respondents who participated in the study, 14 (10%) were in a relationship and not yet officially married, 120 (85.7%) were married women, 2(1.4%) were widowed while 4 (2.9%) had separated from their husbands.



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Figure 4: The findings from the study also indicated that out of the 140 who participated in the study, 75(53.6%) were farmers, 37(26.4%) were business ladies, 7(5%) were civil servants while the rest 21(15%) were doing other forms of earning a living.

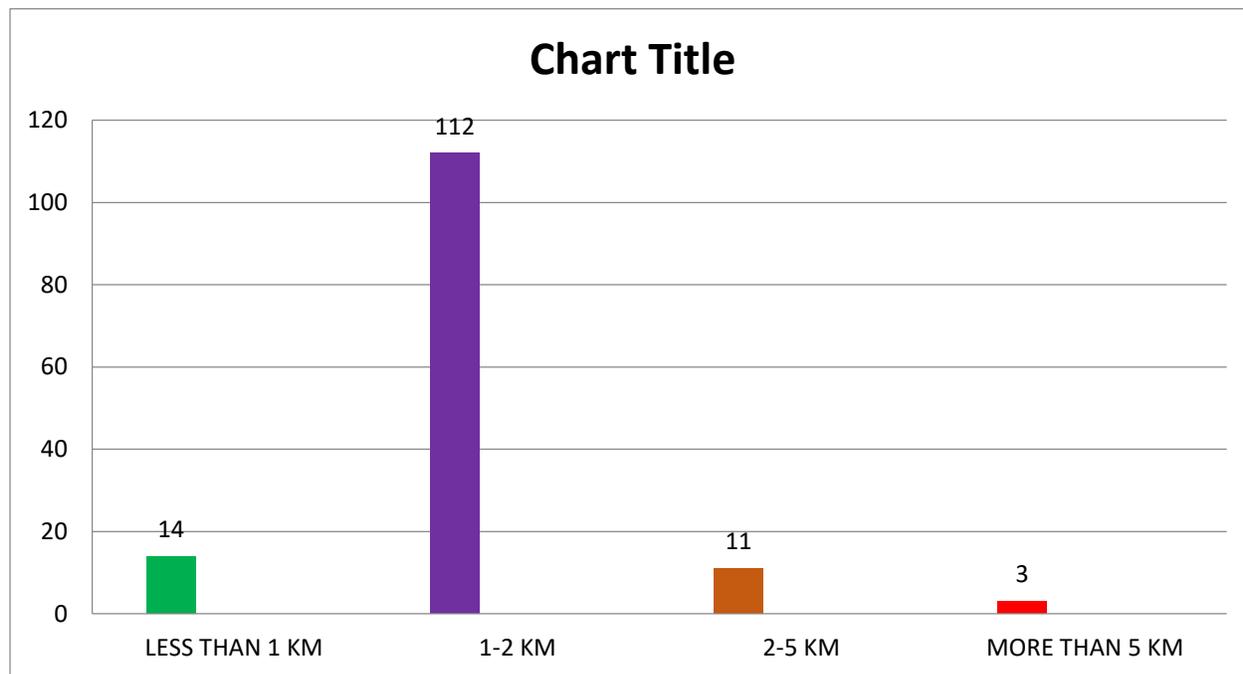
Table 1: Cultural factors associated with low utilization of postnatal care services

Factor	Frequency	Percentage
Use improvised cultural methods at home.	7	5
Community prefers TBA than Health centers.	21	15
Husbands not supportive	70	50
Use natural herbs to clean themselves	42	30

In the study conducted also, 7 (5%) of the respondents said that some mothers don't attend postnatal care service because they use improvised cultural methods at home, 21 (15%) said that some community members prefer traditional Birth attendants more than health centers, 70 (50%) of the respondents said that the husbands are not supportive while the rest 42 (30%) said that some women don't utilize postnatal care services because they use natural herbs to clean themselves as a form of postnatal care.

Hospital-based factors associated with low utilization of post-natal care

Figure 5: showing Distance to the nearest health facility



From Figure 5, a majority (112) of respondents were moving a distance of between 1 and 2 kilometers from home to the health facilities, and 14 of them reported that they were moving a distance of less than 1 kilometer to the health facilities. 11 of them reported that they would move between 2 and 5 kilometers and 3 of them reported that they would move 5 kilometers

Table 2: Other hospital-based factors for low utilization of postnatal care

FACTOR	RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Long distance from health facility	Yes	9	6.4
	No	131	93.6
Inadequate staff at health facility.	Yes	76	54.3
	No	64	45.7
Expensive medical services	Yes	106	75.7
	No	34	24.3
Health workers absent	Yes	49	35
	No	91	65
Rude health workers	Yes	52	37.1
	No	88	62.9

From the study conducted about the hospital-based factors for the low utilization of postnatal care, 9(6.4%) of the mothers said that most mothers don't utilize postnatal care because the facilities are far from the people, while in the

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same category, the majority of the mothers 131 (93.6%) said that in regards to the location of KIUTH, some mothers are not utilizing antenatal care because of other factors but not the long distance from the health facility. Also to note is that when asked about staffing, the majority of the respondents 76(54.3%) said that inadequate staffing in the health facility is one of the factors leading to low utilization of postnatal care while 64(45.7%) said that low utilization of PNC services can be due to other mentioned factors but not inadequate staffing. From the study findings also, 106 (75.7%) of the respondents said that mothers are not coming to the health facility for PNC services because the services are expensive to them unlike 34 (24.3%) who said that regardless of the fact that health facilities are not expensive, still mothers are not utilizing PNC services. The study found out that mothers are not using PNC services due to health workers being absent from the facility, this was seconded by 49(35%) of the respondents, however, an increased number of respondents 91(65%), said that even when health workers are present, not all mothers will attend PNC services and they contributed the low PNC usage to other listed factors. Out of the 140 respondents who participated in the study, 52 (37.1) of the respondents said that mothers are not using PNC services because of the rude health workers but in the same category 88 (62.9%) said that it's not the rudeness of the health workers that makes mothers fail to utilize the PNC services but other factors including long distance, inadequate staffing among others.

DISCUSSION

From the study conducted out of the 140 respondents who participated in the study, 18(12.9%) were below 20 years, 66(47.1%) respondents, the majority were between 20 to 30 years, 50 (35.7%) were between 30 to 40 year while only 6(4.3%) were above 40 years, the majority of the mothers being between 20 to 30 years correlate to the fact that this is the reproductive age bracket for mothers and at this age, the mothers have between two to 4 children and can appreciate the importance of postnatal care both for her health and the health of their children in related studies Koblinsky *et al.* [19] observed that a number of studies support the view that older women And those with two to four children are more likely to seek maternal health-care services than younger women. Also from the study conducted, out of the 140 respondents 24 (24.3%) respondents had a primary level of education, 58 (41.4%) of the respondents had studied a secondary level of education, 42(30%) of the respondents had acquired tertiary education while only 6(4.3%) had covered any formal education schooling the high percentage being in the education category of secondary explains the fact that the study area KIUTH is located in the heart of Ishaka town where the majority of the population have attained at least a formal type of education. The study also indicated that out of the 140 respondents who participated in the study, 14 (10%) were in a relationship and not yet officially married, 120 (85.7%) were married women, 2 (1.4%) were widowed while 4 (2.9%) had separated from their husbands the high percentage of respondents being of married marital status is explained in the fact that KIUTH the study area serves basically the local community in which people are living in their families as nuclear families. The findings from the study also indicated that out of the 140 who participated in the study, 75(53.6%) were farmers, 37(26.4%) were business ladies, 7(5%) were civil servants while the rest 21(15%) were doing other forms of earning a living the high percentage of respondents being farmers is not surprising because the study area KIUTH serves the local community in which people the people depend on farming to earn a living.

Cultural factors associated with low utilization of postnatal care services

In the study conducted also, 7 (5%) of the respondents said that some mothers don't attend postnatal care service because they use improvised cultural methods at home, 21 (15%) said that some community members prefer traditional Birth attendants more than health centers, 70 (50%) of the respondents said that the husbands are not supporting this is a reflection of an indicator in which many for many African communities affairs of maternal and child health are usually left for women with husbands hardly participating in health-seeking of both the mother and the child and in this case the postnatal care services. In related studies different cultural societies have been identified as having different responses in seeking postnatal care services for example a study by Vlassoff [20] showed that in most Ugandan societies, including Basoga in the eastern part of the country, men dominate sexual love relationships which are accepted as part of the culture. Men can play a key role in bringing about gender equality since in most societies, men exercise excessive power in nearly every sphere of Life, ranging from personal decisions regarding the size of families to the policy and programmed decisions taken at all levels of government. Lastly, on the same study findings, the rest 42 (30%) said that some women don't utilize postnatal care services because they use natural herbs to clean themselves as a form of postnatal care this is a reflection that peoples cultural practices are still being practiced regardless of modern service facilities.

Hospital facility-related factors associated with low utilization of post-natal care

Regarding hospital-related factors majority (112) respondents were moving a distance of between 1 and 2 kilometers from home to the health facilities, 14 of them reported that they were moving a distance of less than 1 kilometer to the health facilities. 11 of them reported that they would move between 2 and 5 kilometers and 3 of them reported that they would move 5 kilometers From the study conducted about the hospital-based factors for the low utilization of postnatal care, 9(6.4%) of the mothers said that most mothers don't utilize the postnatal care because the facilities

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are far from the people, while on the same category, the majority of the mothers 131 (93.6%) said that in regards to the location of KIUTH, some mothers are not utilizing antenatal care because of other factors but not the long distance from the health facility. Also to note is that when asked about staffing, the majority of the respondents 76(54.3%) said that inadequate staffing in the health facility is one of the factors leading to low utilization of postnatal care while 64(45.7%) said that low utilization of PNC services can be due to other mentioned factors but not inadequate staffing this is an indicator that some mothers don't attend the postnatal services because they are reluctant to trek long distances. A study by Tomlinson [21] identified that accessibility to the health facility is another fact influencing postnatal care utilization whereby the use of health services is known to depend on physical and geographical accessibility of offered Health services and one of the factors preventing women in developing countries from seeking postnatal Services is the distance from health facilities because of long distances from health facilities women have to look for transport which is scarce in order to reach health facilities. From the study findings also, 106 (75.7%) of the respondents said that mothers are not coming to the health facility for PNC services because the services are expensive to them unlike 34 (24.3%) who said that regardless of the fact that health facilities are not expensive, still mothers are not utilizing PNC services. The study found out that mothers are not using PNC services due to health workers being absent from the facility, this was seconded by 49(35%) of the respondents, however, an increased number of respondents 91(65%), said that even when health workers are present, not all mothers will attend PNC services and they contributed the low PNC usage to other listed factor. Out of the 140 respondents who participated in the study, 52 (37.1) of the respondents said that mothers are not using PNC services because of the rude health workers but in the same category 88 (62.9%) said that it's not the rudeness of the health workers that makes mothers fail to utilize the PNC services but other factors including long distance, inadequate staffing among others this is associated with the conduct of midwives during the delivery time who are usually tough in helping the mother deliver, in some instances, mothers usually develop a negative attitude towards health staff. A related studies study by Winch et al. [22] indicated that Health services often do not respect women's cultural preferences, for example, for privacy, birth position, or treatment by women providers. In addition, women's power to decide when to seek care is restricted in many parts of the world. Culture includes all the beliefs, customs, values, and behavior patterns common to a particular group of people [23-26].

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study concludes that the identified socio-economic factors associated with low Utilization of post-natal care were majorly sex, age, level of education, marital status, and occupation which require specific interventions upon them to enable mothers to utilize the post-natal care services. In the hospital facility-related factors associated with low utilization of postnatal care included the following long distance from home to the health facility, inadequate staff at the health facility, expensive medical services, absent health workers and rude health workers, the expensive medical services being identified most as a major hospital facility discouraging mothers, this correlates to the fact that KIUTH is a private hospital offering standard services and there it has slightly elevated cost as compared to the neighboring health facilities. Concerning cultural factors associated with low utilization of postnatal care services include the use of improvised cultural methods at home, preference for traditional Birth attendants more than health centers also the husbands not being supportive of the mothers and this was the most identified challenge by the majority of mothers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The government should increase the staffing of health units such that mothers can be encouraged to attend postnatal care services. Health workers should do more health education to mothers, especially during their antenatal visits about the need for earlier attending postnatal care services after delivery. Mothers who deliver from health centers should be encouraged to attend post-natal care service and they can be encouraged to bring their husbands so that they both can be health educated about the health of the mother and the child. The government should use mass media like radios, and televisions to encourage mothers to utilize postnatal services in increased numbers. Women should be empowered by the government on health policies because they are the focal points in seeking postnatal services since most men hardly participate in postnatal care seeking. The government should motivate staff so that they are encouraged to spend more hours working with mothers so that mothers can encourage others to receive postnatal services.

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