

Factors Influencing Non-Utilisation of Labour Services Among Postnatal Mothers in Selected Health Facilities in Apapa Local Government Area of Lagos State, Nigeria

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Abstract:

The study examined the factors influencing non-utilisation of labour services among postnatal mothers in selected health facilities in Apapa local government area, Lagos state, Nigeria. A qualitative approach within the interpretative paradigm was adopted for this study. to explore, analyze and describe those factors in their personal narrative. The sample size was determined based on the rules of focus group which is usually between five and eight participants. All postnatal mothers who volunteered to participate were selected initially, among which 7 were selected. The data were collected through semi-structured anonymous focused group discussion, designed with open-ended questions so as to ensure the questions were asked in a coordinated and well-organized manner. The data analysis was done in three stages, which includes preparation stage, organizing stage and reporting stage. The findings of the study revealed that some factors are capable of influencing the decisions of mothers whether or not to use the facilities. Among the factors are the kind of treatment and care received by mothers during visit for maternal and child care services, proximity of health facilities to place of residence of mothers, husband's decision and support to seek maternal and child care services, level of attention received from the health workers

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during visit and the attitude of health workers, affordability of cost of health care services at the health facilities as well as mothers' desire for healthy living for their children and themselves. It was recommended among others that necessary medical equipment should be acquired in government hospitals for optimal health care service delivery for both mothers and their children.

Keywords: Factors, Mothers, Postnatal, Non Utilisation, Delivery Services,



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Introduction

Morbidity and mortality that are related to pregnancy are still unimaginably high; an estimated 303, 000 women died from pregnancy-related causes, 2.7 million babies died during the first 28 days of life and 2.6 million babies were stillborn (WHO, 2016). Access to high-quality maternal healthcare irrespective of economic position and social group is the right of every woman around the globe (Mumtaz, Bahk & Khang, 2017). Though global maternal mortality and morbidity is on the lower trajectory, Sub-Sahara Africa and Asia are still at the receiving end with the duo of Nigeria and India contributing about 35% of total global figures. Nigeria alone contributes about 20% of global maternal mortality and morbidity, with about 10 million women suffering from various body weakening illnesses and life-long disabilities across the globe in addition to 3.3million babies who died annually during infancy or as stillborn (WHO, 2016).

According to World Health Organization (WHO, 2015), about 80% of maternal mortality worldwide occur due to haemorrhage, sepsis, induced abortion, hypertensive disorder of pregnancy and obstructed labour among others. Of-course, such happenings are unpleasant and can be avoided by key health interventions such as: provision of antenatal care services, medically assisted birth delivery and so on (Abbas & Walkern, 2017) The quality maternal health care that women receive during pregnancy, delivery and post postnatal period is important for the health of both the mother and the baby.

Maternal health care services are the care given to women during pregnancy, childbirth and postpartum periods to ensure good health outcomes for the woman and baby. This includes antenatal care, labour care, and postpartum care. Utilisation is an important health issues related to both maternal and child survival as it reduces maternal mortality and morbidity as well as improving the wellbeing of mothers and their children before, during and after birth (Yahya & Pumpaibool, 2019). Non-utilization is the action of not making practical and effective use of labour services among pregnant mothers.

Antenatal care visits are significant for guaranteeing the best health results for mothers and kids. Early and consistent antenatal visits give the chance to identify any related ailment in women during pregnancy (for example, eclampsia, weakness, diabetes in pregnancy). The WHO suggested not less than eight antenatal visits, in new rules in 2016, for a positive encounter and personal satisfaction all through the span of pregnancy (WHO, 2016). The term, 'skilled birth attendant,' was characterized by a joint assertion by the WHO/UNFPA/UNICEF/World Bank in 1999 as "only the individuals with midwifery abilities (for instance, midwives, nurses, and, doctors) who have been taught skillfulness in the aptitudes required to handle common deliveries and diagnose, oversee or refer complications.

The assistance by a skilled birth attendant at delivery is also an important aspect of maternal care. Several babies or mothers are lost due to critical issues such as the inability to recognize delivery complications and ensuring quick referrals. Report from the WHO reveals a half decrease in maternal mortality in Egypt through the multiplying of the extent of births helped by talented experts (WHO, 2016). However, the significance of having a skilled specialist at delivery has been recorded in many studies. Nevertheless, in developing nations, numerous women, despite all, deliver outside the health amenities with no certified attendant at labor (Mumtaz, Bahk & Khang, 2019).



Despite the importance of maternal health care services, the level of utilisation has not been encouraging, especially in developing countries which include Nigeria. Globally, the utilisation rate of maternal health care services in 2017 was 94.6 percent while it ranges from 35.1 to 85.6 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF, 2018). Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey (NHDS, 2018), reveals under-utilisation of maternal health care services in Nigeria.

While ample studies have been conducted to determine the maternal determinant factors in the usage of health care services, these studies did not yield a steady trend of connections between service usage and determinant indicators. Some studies have been carried out in the Western Nigeria, especially in rural areas to determine the maternal healthcare utilizing factors (Ovikuomagbe, 2017). The only available study online in Lagos state was carried out in Amuwo Odofin Local Government Area and focused solely on socioeconomic factors influencing maternal health care utilisation (Akanbi & Olawole-Isaac, 2018). While leveraging on the limitations of previous studies, this study sought to identify factors influencing non utilisation of labour services in the urban city constituting Apapa Local Government area of Lagos state. The study specifically:

- i. examined the factors influencing delivery services non-utilisation among postnatal mothers;
- ii. determined the rate of utilisation of maternal and child care services;
- iii. examined the experiences of mothers in the selected healthcare facilities with utilisation of delivery services during antenatal care, delivery and postnatal care; and
- iv. suggested way forward for improving utilisation of delivery services during antenatal care, delivery and postnatal care

Research Question

1. What are the factors influencing delivery services non-utilisation among postnatal mothers in selected Health facilities in Apapa Local Government Area of Lagos State?
2. What is the rate of utilisation of maternal and child care services in selected Health facilities in Apapa Local Government Area of Lagos State?
3. What are the experiences of mothers in the selected healthcare facilities with utilisation of delivery services during antenatal care, delivery and postnatal care in selected Health facilities in Apapa Local Government Area of Lagos State?
4. What are the way forward for improving utilisation of delivery services during antenatal care, delivery and postnatal care in selected Health facilities in Apapa Local Government Area of Lagos State?

Methodology

A qualitative research design was used for this study. A qualitative approach within the interpretative paradigm was adopted for this study to explore, analyze and describe factors influencing maternal healthcare services utilisation among mothers in selected health facilities in Apapa Local Government, Lagos State in their personal narrative. The study sought subjective accounts of associated factors influencing non utilisation of labour services by mothers in Apapa Local Government.

The target population for this study comprised of postnatal mothers who registered for antenatal but could not deliver in the facility, visiting the primary healthcare facilities for postnatal check-ups and routine immunization at six (6) weeks post-delivery at Sari PHC,



Ijora PHC, Olojowon PHC and General Hospital, Apapa. The sample size was determined based on the rules of focus group which is usually between five and eight participants. All postnatal mothers who volunteered to participate were selected initially, among which 7 were selected. The selection of the final seven (7) was done based on the participants' willingness to continue with the study and need to ensure balance in the respondents' Socio demographic background. Purposive (judgmental) non-probability sampling technique was employed to identify participants who met the criteria for inclusion in the study and were willing to participate in the study.

To identify factors influencing delivery services utilisation among postnatal mothers, the data were collected through semi-structured anonymous focused group discussion, designed with open-ended questions so as to ensure the questions were asked in a coordinated and well-organized manner. The data needed for this study was collected using a voice recorder that captured contributions of all participants of the group. The data analysis was done in three stages, which includes preparation stage, organizing stage and reporting stage.

Results

One of the dominant measures to reduce Maternal Mortality Rate and Child Mortality Rate in Nigeria is the utilisation of antenatal care services by pregnant women in order to avoid health problems in both foetus and the mother. Moreover, in ensuring optimal health outcome for the mother and her baby necessitate Antenatal Care Services which serves as the first contact opportunities for a pregnant woman to connect with health service, thus offering an entry point for integrated care, promoting healthy home practices, influencing care-seeking behaviour and linking women with pregnancy complications to a referral system. Therefore, this study assesses the factors influencing the Maternal Health Service Utilisation among postnatal mothers in selected health facilities in Apapa Local Government Area, Lagos State.

To achieve this aim, a group of women were interviewed to provide information on their view and content analysis technique was used to analyze the information taken into consideration the context in which the data were obtained. The view of women were measured based on the following index or themes grounded in the data that were obtained from observations and group interviews with the women.

1. Views on factors influencing the utilisation of maternal and child care services during prenatal, delivery and postnatal among postnatal women.
2. The rate of utilisation of antenatal care during antenatal, birthing and postnatal periods among postnatal women.
3. Experience of mothers in the selected Healthcare Institutions with the utilisation of delivery services during ANC, delivery and PNC.
4. Suggestion on how to improve the utilisation of maternal health service among postnatal women in Apapa Local Government Area.

Research Question 1: What are the factors influencing delivery services non-utilisation among postnatal mothers.

This session explores the factors that influence the decisions of mothers in using the maternal and child care services during prenatal, delivery and postnatal among women in



four of the selected health institutions in Apapa Local Government Area of Lagos State. The following themes were generated from the study;

- i. Proper care and good health care treatment
- ii. Prompt attendance and attitude of health workers
- iii. Husbands' decision and Support
- iv. Distance to health facilities
- v. Desire for healthy living
- vi. Affordability of health care services

i) Proper care and good health care treatment

Based on the view of some of the women interviewed, it was observed that proper care and good health treatment by the health workers across the four selected health care facilities remain the key in influencing the decisions of mothers in utilizing maternal and child care services. This is evident as a group of women from Olojowon Primary Health Care Centre emphasized that,

“because they take care of my pregnancy very well so I come so that they can take care of my baby now very well”- **Mrs A, Olojowon PHC.**

“they attend to us very well and when a child is sick they give the best treatment to children”- **Mrs G, Olojowon PHC**

“they take care of us while pregnant and we want them to take care of my child very well too”- **Mrs D, Olojowon PHC**

Furthermore, the delivery of good health care services by health workers at Saari PHC contributed immensely to the utilisation of maternal and child care services especially as related to the immunization of children to prevent early childhood diseases. Among the views of mothers on proper care and the right treatment are as follows;

“because I like the way the nurses do attend to us before we give birth so I decided to bring my child there for immunization”- **Mrs F, Sari PHC**

“because of our children's health to avoid diseases”- **Mrs D, Sari PHC**

Emphasis was further resounded by mothers using Ijora Primary Health Care on proper care and good treatment received from health workers by mothers for the safety of their children. Some of the women interviewed shared their views as follows;

“I want to give birth safely because I know they will know how my baby is doing”- **Mrs A, Ijora PHC**

“for proper care for me and my baby”- **Mrs B, Ijora PHC**

“so they can take a proper check on my baby in order to avoid complications after or before delivery”- **Mrs D, Ijora PHC**

ii) Prompt attendance and attitude of health workers

Another notable factor influencing the utilisation of maternal and child care services in selected health facilities in the study location is the prompt attendance and attitude of health workers. Following the shared opinions of the group of women interviewed, it was recorded that majority of the women agreed that the health workers overtime do attend to them very well with a prompt response and good attitude which has encouraged mothers to seek utilisation of maternal and child care prenatal, delivery and postnatal among postnatal



women services in the four health institution for this study. The views of the women interviewed were recorded as follows;

“because they do attend to me very well”-**Mrs D, Olojowon PHC**

“they attend to us very well and they are trying their best” -**Mrs C, Sari PHC**

“I like the way nurses do attends to me there”-**Mrs F- Sari PHC**

“their service is okay and the environment is neat” -**Mrs C, Sari PHC**

Similar opinions concerning the prompt responses and good attitude of health workers at Apapa General Hospital were shared and recorded as follows;

“they attend to us very well and inform us about all we should know”-**Mrs C, Apapa GH**

“they attend to us very well and they do carry test on me”- **Mrs D, Apapa GH**

On the contrary, two of the women at Apapa GH shared their experiences which is capable of adversely influencing the utilisation of maternal and child care services by mothers. They were of the view that attitudes of some health workers at the health centres are not friendly, and therefore could serve as a barrier in seeking the health care service.

“they reacted harshly to me”-**Mrs E, Apapa GH**

“when I was here at night one nurse shouted at me but others were nice to me”-**Mrs G, Apapa GH**

iii) Husbands' decision and Support

In seeking the service of health workers in relating to both maternal and child health, the decision of either couples or husband plays a crucial role. Observations from this study revealed that emotional and financial support received from partners will determine to a large extent the level of utilisation of maternal and child care services. Pieces of evidence gathered and recorded among postnatal women who were interviewed on who make decisions on seeking maternal health care services showed that majority of the women at Olojowon Primary Health Care were able to seek maternal and child care service as a result of support received from their husbands.

Similar observations were recorded at Saari Primary Health Centre, Apapa General Hospital, and Ijora Primary Health Centre as most of the postnatal women affirmed that, the decision about when to seek maternal and child care services is made by their husband. On the other hand, few of them emphasized the decision on when to seek maternal and child care service is a joint decision by both parties.

iv) Distance to health facilities

The proximity of health care centres is another critical factor influencing the utilisation of maternal and child care services during prenatal, delivery and postnatal among postnatal women in the selected health facilities in Apapa Local Government Area of Lagos State. This study revealed that despite the key role of maternal and child care treatment for good living and wellbeing of mothers and children, long-distance to the point of service delivery could be a barrier in enjoying such care. It was observed and recorded from this study that distance to health facilities plays a significant role in making a decision whether or not to seek maternal and child care services. Women interviewed from Olojowon Primary Health Care shared their views as follows;

“it is easy for me because my house is near to this place”- **Mrs B, Olojowon PHC**

“it is not easy because of distance we take bike or car to the health center”- **Mrs D, Olojowon PHC**



“it was in the night that I went into labour and there is no car to convey me”-**Mrs F, Olojowon PHC**

A similar opinion was shared by some other women who emphasized the cost and sacrifices implication of not living within the location where maternal and child care services could be enjoyed.

“I left my home so I do stay with my inlaw that stays near to the clinic a day before my clinic day” -**Mrs F, Olojowon PHC**

“I saw the sign at night but I didn’t want to come to the hospital to waste time when am not yet into labour, i asked my husband to call one nurse that lives close to my house by then I was already into labour”- **Mrs A, Apapa GH**

“my house is far from here and when I first came here they did a scan for me which shows the baby hasn’t come to a position to be delivered so I decided to go to traditional home for delivery” -**Mrs F, Apapa GH**

It was further observed that long-distance could affect accessing the service for maternal and child care service by mother as this was evident from the experiences of some mothers as follows;

“my house is far to the health center and nobody was around to take me there” -**Mrs B, Apapa GH**

“when I was on the way I was already in labour so they took me to nearby hospital clinic because of the distance” **Mrs A, Ijora PHC**

“if I come here they will say it’s not yet time so by the time I went into labour there was no movement due to lockdown” **Mrs C, Apapa GH**

Similarly, some women shared their experiences of not being able to enjoy maternal health care service at the place of registration due to distance and therefore not to have hindered the delivery of maternal health service.

“when I went into labour I couldn’t make it up here again” **Mrs A, Ijora PHC**

“I fell in labour at night and there was no movement due to lockdown” **Mrs C, Ijora PHC**

v) The desire for healthy living

One of the major influencing factors for seeking maternal and child health care by mothers is the need to ensure and promoting healthy living for both mothers and children. The majority of mothers visit maternal health care facilities in ensuring that they are in good health during pregnancy, during delivery and most importantly after child delivery. Findings from this study also supported this claim as quite a number of women interviewed at the selected health facilities in Apapa Local Government Area of Lagos State shared similar views as follows;

“because they take care of my pregnancy very well so I come so that they can take care of my baby now very well”-**Mrs A, Olojowon PHC**

“they take care of us while pregnant and we want them to take care of my child very well too” **Mrs D, Olojowon PHC**

“so that we can have healthy baby, so I decided to come” **Mrs A, Sari PHC**

“because I want my baby to be fine” **Mrs G, Sari PHC**

“I come so I can check my health status and that of my baby” **Mrs C, Apapa GH**

Additionally, it was observed from the study that, seeking maternal and child care health services will help in ascertaining the condition of the unborn child and increase the chance

for safe delivery. This was noted and observed as some of the women interviewed expressed their reasons for seeking maternal and child care services Apapa General Hospital in Lagos State.

"I come so I can know how my baby is doing- **Mrs C, Apapa GH**

"I come so I can know my health condition and to know how the baby is doing"- **Mrs D, Apapa GH**

"I come so I can know if my baby is fine inside"-**Mrs A, Apapa GH**

vi) Affordability of health care services

Though adequate Antenatal Care (ANC) and skilled obstetric assistance during delivery are important strategies that significantly reduced maternal mortality and morbidity, yet the cost of treatment could be a barrier in seeking maternal and child care health services especially among the low-income earners in Nigeria. The demand for and utilisation of delivery services depends on numerous factors, many beyond a woman's direct control, including the physical accessibility of facilities to her home; direct and indirect costs of obtaining services including not only fees for medication, transportation, feeding and accommodation charges but also the convenience of opening hours and average waiting times, the extent to which staffs are competent, providing quality care and demonstrating cultural sensitivity to her needs, and the availability of other needed key health care inputs including essential drugs and food supplements. Observations and opinions from postnatal women in the study showed that the cost of maternal and child care services delivery at Apapa Local Government Areas across the four selected health institutions is relatively cheap and affordable. This is evident as a group of women interviewed supported this assertion as follows;

a. "they don't take much money from us"-**Mrs C, Olojowon PHC**

b. "it is not costly except the test they asked us to carry out its costly"-**Mrs D, Sari PHC**

c. "the cost of delivery is not high, it is affordable"-**Mrs A, Apapa GH**

d. On the other hand, two of the women from Ijora Primary Health Centre were indifference as regards the cost of treatment and service delivery with the opinion that the cost of treatment at

the health facilities is relatively moderate even though some people might not be able to afford since

there is inequality in socio-economic of people in the country.

"though fingers are not equal some may be able to afford it and some may not be able to afford it"-**Mrs B, Ijora PHC**

e. "i can say it is much and some will say it's not much because our standard of living is different"- **Mrs E, Ijora PHC**

vii)

Other factors

In addition to the aforementioned factors influencing the utilisation of maternal and child care services during prenatal, delivery and postnatal among postnatal women in selected Health Institutions in Apapa Local Government Area of Lagos State, other underlying factors are capable of determining the utilisation of maternal and child health care facilities in the study location. Findings from the study showed that peer and family influence, home chores responsibility of women and number of working hours of the selected health facilities.



Notably, a group of women interviewed at Olojowon Primary Health Centre shared their views as they were influenced in seeking maternal and child health care as a result of friends and family influence at a different point in time.

“ i see those that do use it that’s why I come to use this place”-**Mrs A, Olojowon PHC**

“my friend that used this place I like the way they do attend to her”-**Mrs D, Olojowon PHC**

“because this is where my family members do register”-**Mrs F, Olojowon PHC**

Moreover, home chores were observed as another significant factor that could affect the utilisation of maternal and child health care in the study location. According to the women at Olojowon PHC, they affirmed that they do not allow their home responsibilities to conflict with their attendance and to seek health services.

“we don’t allow our responsibilities at home and work to disturb us to go to health center”-**Mrs A, Olojowon PHC**

“i do go to health center first and when I get back home I will start doing my work”-**Mrs B, Olojowon PHC**

“when I was pregnant I locked up my shop so it’s easy for me to attend clinic”- **Mrs F, Olojowon PHC**

Similar opinions were observed by women who seek maternal and child care services at other selected health facilities in the study location. They emphasized the priority placed in seeking health care in ensuring good wellbeing for themselves and child.

“health is wealth so if one has good health is the best so we sacrifice other things for our clinic day ”- **Mrs A, Ijora PHC**

“eh! i do suspend my work to go to clinic”-**Mrs B, Sari PHC**

“time for work is different from time for the clinic”- **Mrs A-Apapa GH**

“i ensure I wake up early to do what I have to do before going” **Mrs D, Sari PHC**

Finally, the number of working hours was identified as another significant factor influencing the utilisation of maternal and child care services during prenatal, delivery and postnatal among postnatal women in selected Health Institutions in Apapa Local Government Area of Lagos State. This was observed as a group of women interviewed decided not to seek health care services for child delivery in one of the selected health facilities for the study. They affirmed that one health care facilities is not operating on the round-up basis (Twenty four hours services) which make them not to be working at night. It was reported that Sari Primary Health Care is not doing night shifting in its service delivery. “Because they don’t do night shifting”- Mothers interviewed, Sari PHC.

Research Question 2: What is the rate of utilisation of maternal and child care services?

This session explored the rate of utilisation of antenatal care during antenatal, birthing and postnatal periods among postnatal women patronizing selected Health Institutions in Apapa Local Government Area of Lagos State. The information on the rate of utilisation was elicited from the group of women interviewed in the four selected health facilities in the study location. Observations from the responses from the women revealed that the average number of times women utilize maternal and child care health services are five times. The study furthered showed that there was variation in the number of times women visited health facilities in seeking maternal and child health care services. This was evident from the reports

from the mothers on the average number of times they visited health facilities in a year as follows on;

“5 times”- **Mrs A, Sari PHC**

“7 times”- **Mrs C, Sari PHC**

“6 times”- **Mrs D, Sari PHC**

“7 times”- **Mrs E, Sari PHC**

Similar reports were recorded from mothers from Apapa general hospital who seek maternal and child health care service on certain times of the year when they are more likely to use a health facility

“6 times”- Mrs A, Apapa GH

“5 times” Mrs B, Apapa GH

“6 times” Mrs C, Apapa GH,

“4 times”Mrs G, Apapa GH

Moreover, mothers at Olojown PHC reported that their rate of utilisation for maternal and child care services can be traced back to some months ago and that they have been patronizing the health facility before the time of this study.

“i do utilize this place”- **Mrs B, Olojowon PHC**

“i have utilized this place before”- **Mrs D, Olojowon PHC**

Mothers interviewed at Ijora Primary Health Centre also expressed their opinion on the effect of seasonality as it influences the rate of utilisation of antenatal care during antenatal, birthing and postnatal periods among postnatal women.

“oh! it does affect because when it’s raining it’s not everyone that has umbrella”-**Mrs A, Ijora PHC**

“it does affect because if it is raining I won’t be able to go out because I’m allergic to cold”-**Mrs B, Ijora PHC**

Research Question 3: What are the experiences of mothers in the selected healthcare facilities with utilisation of delivery services during antenatal care, delivery and postnatal care?

Pregnancy is a natural process and women with some experience might consider antenatal care less necessary as a result of their previous experience at the point of service delivery with health care workers. Therefore, this study seeks to know the experience of mothers in the selected Healthcare Institutions with the utilisation of delivery services during ANC, delivery and PNC in Apapa Local Government Area of Lagos State.

Following the observations and opinions of mothers who seek maternal and child care health services at the four selected health institutions, it was recorded that the mothers were comfortable with the services received from the health facilities

“ah! i do feel comfortable if I don’t have work to do at home that will hasten me”- **Mrs A, Olojowon PHC**

“they are taking care of us and also our children and they give them immunization”- **Mrs D, Olojowon PHC**

“i like the way the nurses attend to me”- **Mrs D, Sari PHC**

“they attend to us as we come and they don’t take too much time”- **Mrs E, Olojowon PHC**

“they gave us adequate care”- **Mrs F, Olojowon PHC**



More so, the study revealed that mothers were satisfied with the kind of services rendered by the health workers at the health facilities of Apapa Local Government Area of Lagos State. Some of the mothers expressed their experiences in relation to service delivery as well as the waiting time at the health facilities at Olojowon PHCs as follows;

“hm! if we don’t meet many people they will attend to us on time”- **Mrs A, Olojowon PHC**

“they attend to us as we come and they don’t take too much time”- **Mrs B, Olojowon PHC**

“their attitudes to us is okay”-**Mrs C, Sari PHC**

“they attend to us according to the time we get here”- **Mrs C, Olojowon PHC**

Furthermore, the mothers shared their view on the treatment and attitude of health workers towards them as patients that patronize the health facilities for maternal and child care health services. It was recorded that some of the health workers in some of the selected health facilities do act at times harshly towards the circumstances of mothers which is capable of discouraging mothers from seeking their services.

“they treated me well but when it got to a stage they acted harshly that I will even ask myself why do I come to this place in the first instance”- **Mrs A, Olojowon PHC**

“at times if I call their number they won’t pick my calls”-**Mrs B, Olojowon PHC**

Mothers further shared their experiences at the way health workers attended to them at every point in time as well as giving accurate and sound health advice for the general well-being of both mother and child at Saari primary health centre.

“ ah! i like the way the nurses attend to me o”- **Mrs D, Sari PHC**

“they attend to us very well and give us proper advice on how to take care of our baby”- **Mrs B, Sari PHC**

Similar views were shared at Apapa general hospital as mothers expressed their satisfaction with the experiences they have had with the health workers at the health facility over time. They emphasized their comfortability with the attitude, behaviour and service delivery.

“they don’t act harshly on me and they behave very well”- **Mrs D, Apapa GH**

“oh! they behave very well to me”- **Mrs F, Apapa GH**

“we have a positive experience here and they give us proper knowledge about how to take care of our babies that it is after six months we can introduce food to them”- **Mrs A, Ijora PHC**

“they attend to us very well and tell us how to take care of ourselves”- **Mrs B, Ijora PHC**

On the contrary, one of the mothers complained of the language barrier between her and the health workers that had to affect the level of satisfaction of service delivery at Apapa general hospital due to her inability to communicate in the Yoruba language

“well, they have a good attitude but I don’t understand their language because they speak in Yoruba and if I complain they won’t answer me”- **Mrs A, Apapa GH**

Research Question 4: What are the way forward for improving utilisation of delivery services during antenatal care, delivery and postnatal care?

Despite the increase in the utilisation of maternal and child care health services in the study location, there are still gaps that need to be filled in increasing and improving the utilisation of maternal and child care services. Findings from this study based on views and opinions of mothers who are health users of antenatal care suggested some plans of action that are capable of improving the utilisation which in turn will help government planners in

reducing the poor utilisation of antenatal care services as well as making future policies and decisions in the state and the country at large.

The following suggestions are way forward for the improvement in service delivery in order to increase the utilisation of antenatal care during antenatal, birthing and postnatal periods among postnatal women patronizing the selected health Institutions in Apapa Local Government Area of Lagos State.

The better friendly attitude of health worker

Acquisition of good working scale to know the weight of the babies

Expansion of working space

Increase the number of working hours for better service delivery

Employment of more health worker by the government

Some of the mothers' suggestions were recorded as follows;

“the nurses shouldn't be chasing people anyhow again”- **Mrs D, Olojowon PHC**

“nurses should attend to us friendly they should please, have a good working scale to know the weight of our babies”- **Mrs F, Olojowon PHC**

“hmm! if they can turn this place to a bigger place, we can make use of this place better”- **Mrs B, Sari PHC**

“our government should employ more workers so that they can work at night”- **Mrs C, Sari PHC**

“there is a shortage of staff they should employ more staffs so that their work can be extended to night shift”- **Mrs D, Sari PHC**

“ ah! before if we come to the clinic they used to give us a gift like pampers but now they don't give us so they should try to be doing it again”- **Mrs B,Ijora PHC**

Discussion

Findings from the study showed that utilisation of maternal and child care services during prenatal, delivery and postnatal among postnatal mothers in selected Health facilities in Apapa Local Government Area of Lagos State depends on the numbers of factors among which include; proper care and good treatment received from the health facilities by the health workers, distance to health facilities from places of residence of mothers, husband's decision and support to seek maternal and child care services for prenatal, delivery and postnatal, attitude of health workers and level of attendance of health workers for service delivery, affordability of health care services by mothers as well as desire for healthy living for mothers and child.

Findings from this study were in support of previous studies on the factors influencing maternal and child care services. According to Dapaah and Nachinaab (2019), the need for proper care and treatment was considered as one of the factors influencing decisions of mothers to seek antenatal care services. This was in line with the findings in this study because despite the challenges faced by mothers in seeking maternal and child care health services, the need components explained the reasons for attending antenatal and postnatal services.

Moreover, Zhao, Yang and Pan (2012) considered financial difficult as a prominent factors that could serve as barrier to antenatal care services. Evidence from this study supported this assertion as affordability of cost of health care services was observed to influence the decision of pregnant women and mothers in seeking such services. Also,



inability of pregnant women and mothers to afford medication prescribed by health workers could serve as a barrier as evidence in this study and supported by Owino (2015).

Husband's support in seeking and utilizing maternal and child health care services was reported to be a significant factors influencing decision of pregnant mothers in this study. This finding was in line with Ali, Dero and Ali (2018) which emphasized that the utilisation of maternal health care service (MHC) was almost nine times more likely for women reported their husbands to approve ANC than women with those whose husbands did not approve ANC service. Similarly study by Fiedler (2013) revealed that husbands worked in business or services were most likely to be users of modern health care services during and after pregnancy.

Proximity of health facilities to place of residence was found to be another factor that influence maternal and child health care services in the selected health facilities in Apapa Local Government Area. This finding was in line with finding from [Mwaniki, Kabiru and Mbugua](#) (2015). Also, Yamashita and Kunkel (2010) reported that lack of money for transport and hospital fee are the major constraints experienced by the mothers as they sought for the services.

The Competence and attitude of health workers according to Cornelia and Simona (2009) was considered a significant factor capable of influencing the decision of pregnant mothers in seeking maternal and child health care services. Evidence from this study revealed that the attitude of physician, nurses and doctors towards mothers has a great way in determining their responses to utilisation of maternal services.

Moreover, the study revealed that there were variations in the non-utilisation of labour services among women across the four selected health facilities in Apapa Local Government Area. Nevertheless, mothers visit the health facilities on the average of five (5) times during antenatal before child delivery for healthy living and proper care.

Additionally, the study revealed that mothers were satisfied with level of care and treatment received during antenatal, delivery, and postnatal in the selected health facilities. Also, it was found that most of the mothers were comfortable with the level of service delivery across the health facilities even though they were not comfortable with the behavioural attitude of most of the health workers.

Conclusions

The results have shown that a number of factors cannot be over looked as reported by mothers in determining the extent to which health facilities will be utilized for maternal and child care purposes. Therefore, the study concluded that these factors are capable of influencing the decisions of mothers whether or not to use the facilities. Among the factors are the kind of treatment and care received by mothers during visit for maternal and child care services, proximity of health facilities to place of residence of mothers, husband's decision and support to seek maternal and child care services, level of attention received from the health workers during visit and the attitude of health workers, affordability of cost of health care services at the health facilities as well as mothers' desire for healthy living for their children and themselves.



Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following plans of action are hereby suggested to help government in reducing the poor utilisation of labour services among mothers across the selected health facilities of Apapa Local Government Area as well as the State at large.

1. Necessary medical equipment should be acquired in government hospitals for optimal health care service delivery for both mothers and their children. Examples of these important equipment include good working scale to measure the weight of babies which were not available in most of the government owned hospitals.
2. More capable and competent health workers should be employed at the various session of the health facilities which could help to increase the number of working hours of staff including night operation to help in attending to emergence at night.
3. There is a need to provide more primary health care facilities at the study area in order to reduce the distance challenges faced by mothers in accessing maternal and child health care services as reported by mothers.

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