Title: Assessment of Postnatal care utilization among Nigerian women using Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS)

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Postnatal period is the period beginning immediately after the birth of a child and extending for about six weeks. The postnatal period is the most vulnerable time for both mother and baby and is critical not only for survival but also to the future of mothers and neonates. However utilization of postnatal services remains low in Nigeria despite its effectiveness in reducing maternal and neonatal mortality and morbidity. Hence this study is aimed at determining the factors associated with utilization of post natal care among Nigerian mothers, the quality of post natal care being assessed in Nigeria, and to determine the influence of utilization of antenatal service on postnatal care utilization.
Postnatal service information of women from 2008-2013 was extracted from the NDHS survey data, which made use of a multi-stage cluster sampling design, postnatal care information was obtained and analyzed. First, individual and community level factors was determined, chi-square test was used to test the association of social, economic and demographic characteristics of mothers with the experience of postnatal care service. Subsequently, a logistic regression model was used to estimate the relative association of factors that influence postnatal care utilization after excluding variables that were not significant at the bivariate level.
Out of the 38,948 women aged 15-49 years interviewed in the 2013 NDHS, a total of 19,538 (50.2%) of them had at least a birth (which survived beyond 2 months) in the previous five years before the survey**.** The mean age at last birth was 28.2 $\pm$ 7.0 years. The results showed both individual and community characteristics to be associated with postnatal care utilization. About 48.8% of women who utilized antenatal care services within the first five months along with the other 17.8% who utilized antenatal care services within 6-10 months (OR=3.10; CI=2.74-3.51) and women who had a higher birth weight (OR=2.58; CI=1.10-1.82), had a higher probability of utilizing postnatal care services. In contrast, only 462 (2.4%) were delivered by caesarean session while majority (18951, 97.0%) of them were not delivered by a caesarean session (OR=0.49; CI=0.38-0.63) and 21.7% women with poorest wealth index (OR=0.49; CI=0.40-0.60) were less likely to utilize postnatal care services. Also 20.2% of women who had primary education along 89.1% of women with the desire for the pregnancy were also associated with a reduction in postnatal care utilization.
Findings from this study revealed that utilization of postnatal care service in Nigeria is still low. Both individual and community characteristics showed a significant impact on postnatal care utilization. Implementation of community-based interventions targeting poverty alleviation and women empowerment will help improve postnatal care utilization. The study also provides evidence that emphasis should be placed on the availability of antenatal care services which enhances postnatal care utilization and assistance rendered to women who do not have access to health services. (Up to 600 words)

Biography

Obi-Nwafor Ugochukwu completed his M.Sc at the age of 25 years from the prestigious University of Ibadan and is currently about to start a PhD. He is the director of programs at Muty-Josie support foundation. Delta State, Nigeria.

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