

Awareness and Utilization of Reproductive and Child Health Services among Married Women

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Abstract: Maternal and child health services form the backbone of any welfare state. The present study investigated the Awareness and Utilization of Reproductive and Child Health services – a flagship program of Govt. of India in the arena of maternal and child health services, among married women. A quantitative research design was used for the study. The study was theoretically supported by Pender's health promotion model. A total of 213 married women, were selected for the study using multi stage random sampling technique. The data were collected using socio personal data sheet, structured questionnaire, rating scale and check list. The study results revealed that majority (76.5%) of married women had average awareness about RCH services. It also found out that 4.7 % of participants had good awareness and 18.8 % of the married women had poor awareness regarding Reproductive and Child Health services. The study shows that majority (89.2%) of married women had good utilization of Reproductive and Child Health services and 10.8% had poor utilization. The study findings also identified the major reasons for non-utilization of RCH services i.e. precious pregnancy, reluctance to choose Govt. facility, previous experience with the attitude of health workers etc. The researcher has prepared an information booklet and it was given to each married women who participated in the study.

Keywords: Reproductive and Child Health services, Awareness; Utilization

1. Introduction

Reproductive and Child Health (RCH) programme is a comprehensive sector wide flagship programme, under the umbrella of the Government of India's (GoI) National Health Mission (NHM), to deliver the RCH targets for reduction of maternal and infant mortality and total fertility rates. RCH programme aims to reduce social and geographical disparities in access to and utilisation of quality reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health services. Six key components of the RCH programme are Maternal Health, Child Health, Nutrition, Family Planning, Adolescent Health (AH) and Pre Conception-Pre Natal-Diagnostic Techniques.⁶

A study by Pratiba et.al. revealed that majority of the participants (92.66%) we're aware about the various kind of services delivered under the umbrella of RCH.⁴ Being a community of diverse, social, cultural and economic background India's health care delivery system has its own challenges. It has identified factors such as low birth spacing, lower utilization of ANC care services, higher malnutrition, and poor immunization coverage among working women had indicated for the underutilization of RCH services.⁵

2. Objectives

- 1) To assess the awareness regarding Reproductive and Child Health services among married women with under five children.
- 2) To assess the utilization of Reproductive and Child Health services among married women with under five children.
- 3) To identify the barriers in utilization of RCH services.

3. Materials and Methods

A Quantitative non-experimental research approach is used in the study. The research design used for the present study was non-experimental descriptive survey. Multistage random sampling technique is used for the study. In this study samples consist of 213 married women from four sub centres of Ettumanoor FHC i.e. Ettumanoor, Peroor, Thellokom and Vallikkad. Inclusion criteria of the present study was married women who, have under five children and can read and write Malayalam. Those who are excluded from the study were women who are with cognitive impairment.

Tools and techniques used to collect data in the present study were the following: Socio-personal Data sheet, Structured questionnaire to assess awareness of married women regarding RCH services, Utilization rating scale and Checklist to identify reason for non- utilization of reproductive and child health services.

4. Results

4.1 Socio personal data of married women

Among the 213 married women, 60.1% were in the age group of 26-35 years where as 23 % belongs to 36-45 age group. Study also revealed that 63.4 % married women were graduate and above and 22.1% had studied up to higher secondary education. Majority (57.7 %) of married women were jobless and 31.0% were working in private sector. 58.2% women got married between 18-25 years of age and 39.4% between 26-32 years of age. 36.2% married women had non priority ration card and 33.8% non-priority. 56.8% of married women had normal delivery and 34.7% married women had caesarean section. 69% of married women had only one under five child and 26.3% mothers had two under five children. 55.4% of married women preferred government hospital and 44.6% preferred private hospital for their

primary health care needs. 86.4% of married women had no complications during pregnancy and 13.6% women had complications during pregnancy. 88.3% of married women had no complications during delivery and 11.7% had complications during delivery.

4.2 Awareness of Reproductive and Child Health services among married women

Table 1: Frequency distribution and percentage of married women based on awareness of RCH services, (n =213)

Awareness of RCH services	f	%
Good (21-25)	10	4.7
Average (11-20)	163	76.5
Poor (0-10)	40	18.8

Table 1 shows that 76.5% of married women had average knowledge about RCH services.

4.3 Utilization of Reproductive and Child Health services among married women

Table 2: Frequency distribution and percentage of married women based on utilization of RCH services, (n=213)

Utilization of RCH services	f	%
Good (21-32)	190	89.2
Poor (0-20)	23	10.8

Table 2 shows that 89.2% married women had good utilization of RCH services and 10.8% had average utilization.

4.4 Reason for non-utilization of Reproductive and Child Health services among married

Reasons for non-utilization of Reproductive and Child Health services among married women were: precious pregnancy (8.9%), complicated pregnancy (2.8%), attitude of health workers towards patients (7%), long waiting time for getting services (2.8%), previous experience with government hospitals (3.8%), poor quality of services at government hospitals (0.5%), difficulty in travelling (2.3%), less number of staff (0.5%), less interest of family members (2.3%), lack of awareness regarding the schemes (1.9%), lack of awareness regarding the healthcare centers (0.9%) and other reasons (0.5%).

5. Conclusion

The study on awareness and utilization of Reproductive and child health services among married women was conducted in four wards in Ettumanoor Municipality. The study concluded that majority of participants had average awareness and good utilization of Reproductive and child health services.

Major reasons for non-utilization of Reproductive and child health services among married women were due to precious pregnancy, complicated pregnancy, attitude of health workers towards patients, long waiting time for getting services, previous experience with government hospitals, poor quality of services at government hospitals, difficulty in travelling, less number of staff, less interest of family members, lack of

awareness regarding the schemes, lack of awareness regarding the healthcare centers, other reasons.

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