

SUMMARY

This was a hospital based descriptive study to assess the magnitude of bypass and to identify the factors influencing this phenomenon. This was conducted at the GH Kurunegala from 6th to the 27th of July 1993, both days inclusive. The sample consisted of all mothers who had bypassed the local natal care unit and had gained admission to the maternity unit of GH Kurunegala during this period.

The interviewers were maternity qualified staff nurses of this unit. The instrument used was a structured pre-coded questionnaire. Senior House Officers and House Officers served as supervisors assisted by the cooperation extended by the Obstetricians. A high degree of reliability and validity of data was achieved by the Principal Investigator by personally supervising and validating the data so collected.

The effect of some selected variables like demographic, socio-economic and some identified service factors such as antenatal and natal care services, on this phenomenon of bypass was analyzed.

The findings of the study indicated that 35% of the mothers admitted to GH Kurunegala have bypassed a primary level natal care institution closest to their residence. There was over-crowding and over-utilization of natal care services observed at GH Kurunegala. It was evident that this was due to the fact that there was no admission policy, referral or back-referral system operating at this institution.

The closest local institutions bypassed were District Hospitals(68.1%) and Peripheral Units(16.9%). The commonest age group of 20 - 30yrs rated 62.3% of the mothers. The second third and fourth pregnancies have constituted 53.2% and primi-para 43% of the bypassed sample. 78.7% of mothers lived within 25 miles from the GH Kurunegala.

Of the 207 bypassed mothers 82.8% were with secondary and higher education and 86% were unemployed. 79% had a monthly family income of more than Rs.750.00 and 91.6% of mothers had employed husbands with a 43% in self employment.

80.7% them had access to a primary natal care institution within 5 miles of their residence but 59.4% had preferred to spend less than Rs.25.00 for commuter transport and gain admission to GH Kurunegala.

There was no significant association observed between the distance travelled to GH Kurunegala, and, the education level, family income or the employment status of the mother at 5% level. There was also no association observed between the employment status of the husband and the distance travelled to the GH Kurunegala at 5% significance level.

The main reason for bypassing given by 61.8% of mothers was seeking specialized care. 82.6% of the bypassed mothers were delivered normally by the midwife. 97.6% of mothers gave birth to live non-asphyxiated babies.

The antenatal care received by mothers have been above the approved quality and coverage as revealed by the indicators, and, to the satisfaction of the mothers. All these indicators of antenatal care were above 90% coverage. A surprising feature observed in this study was 56% of the mothers have been advised by the field midwife to gain admission to GH Kurunegala for delivery.