

## ABSTRACT

### Background

Maternal and perinatal mortality are the traditional national and international measures of the quality of maternal care. But if one needs to comprehensively assess the quality of maternal care, it is imperative to include a patient centred measure such as women's satisfaction. The aim of this study was to describe satisfaction with intrapartum and postpartum hospital care, and determine factors associated with satisfaction in relation to a woman's sociodemographic characteristics and pregnancy related characteristics.

### Methods

A cross sectional analytical study was conducted in Colombo North Teaching hospital Ragama involving 422 postnatal mothers with uncomplicated birth outcome. A structured, interviewer administered questionnaire was used to collect data on discharge from the postnatal ward. Patient satisfaction with intrapartum and postpartum care was assessed using two composite scales covering five satisfaction dimensions (accessibility, physical environment, interpersonal aspects of care, technical aspects of care and information and communication). Participants' responses were marked using a 5 point Likert Scale. Satisfaction with intrapartum and postpartum hospital care was decided by the cutoff point of 80% out of the total scores in composite scales. To determine the sociodemographic and pregnancy related factors associated with patient satisfaction, cross tabulations were generated and odds ratio (OR) with 95% confidence interval (95% CI) was calculated.

### Results

The study revealed that a majority of mothers were "satisfied" with intrapartum (90.3%) and postpartum (91%) care at CNTH Ragama. There was more variability of responses with regard to satisfaction with different dimensions of care. Interpersonal aspects of care was the most satisfied dimension in both intrapartum (96.7%) and postpartum (97.6%) care. Mothers were least satisfied with physical environment in both intrapartum and postpartum care. Factors significantly associated with satisfaction with intrapartum care were age more than 30 years, intended pregnancy, multiparity, having received field antenatal care, vaginal delivery, delivery at or before 40 weeks of POA, and postpartum hospital stay of 1 - 3 days. Being a member of an extended

family and residing within 10km of CNTH Ragama were significantly associated with postpartum satisfaction. Pregnancy related factors significantly associated with satisfaction with postpartum care included intended pregnancy, multiparity, having received field antenatal care, vaginal delivery, immediate skin to skin contact with the baby and initiation of breast feeding within 30 minutes of delivery. Mothers whose expectations were less than or same as the care experience were more satisfied than those with higher expectations.

## **Conclusions**

The current study showed high satisfaction ratings for both intrapartum and postpartum hospital care. But women's appraisal of specific aspects of care revealed more response variability indicating that women do discriminate between different satisfaction dimensions. Hospital managers and clinicians should pay special attention to the aspects of care which caused major concern and dissatisfaction among many patients. Care providers should attempt to promote modifiable factors associated with satisfaction identified in the study in order to gain more patient satisfaction. Further research into patient satisfaction should be carried out combining quantitative and qualitative methods to obtain a more detailed picture of patient satisfaction. A valid, reliable and multidimensional maternal satisfaction measurement tool which is culturally sensitive and applicable to Sri Lankan setting should be developed.

**Key words:** intrapartum care, postpartum care, patient satisfaction, determinants of patient satisfaction, teaching hospital, Sri Lanka