

ABSTRACT

In Sri Lanka, high proportions of mothers deliver at hospitals. Still a significant number of mothers do deliver at home. There are regional variations in the home deliveries. The objective of the present study was to identify the factors which were associated with the home deliveries in Thampalakamam, Trincomalee.

This was a community based, exploratory type of case control study. Cases were home deliveries that occurred during the period from Jan 1, 2000 to Dec 31, 2002 in Thampalakamam Divisional Director of Health Services (DDHS) area. Controls were institutional deliveries among women residing in Thampalakamam DDHS area during the same period. A total of 139 cases and 278 controls were identified for this study. Interviewer administered structured questionnaire was used to collect information. Data were analyzed using SPSS computer package. Odds ratio (OR) was calculated to estimate the risk. Chi square test was applied to identify the significance level.

The following factors were found to have strong association with home deliveries: Islam religion (OR = 35.5, 95% CI 19.0-67.8), low (< grade 5) maternal education (OR= 2.4, 95%CI 1.6- 3.7), did not visit an antenatal clinic (OR =6.5, 95% CI 4.1- 10.4), public health midwife did not visit the home (OR=7.5, 95%CI 4.7- 12.0), multi parity (OR=3.9, 95%CI 2.4- 6.6), maternal age >34years (OR=3.1, 95% CI 1.7- 5.7), low (<Rs500) per capita income (OR=3.8 , 95% CI 2.3- 6.3).

Type of house (whether temporary or permanent), ownership of the house, and type of family (nuclear or extended) did not show any relationship with the place of delivery.

Lack of transport (35.5%), precipitated delivery (20.3%), absence of a person to accompany her (11.6%), civil unrest (10.9%), and fear of hospital (10.9%) were mentioned as reasons for home deliveries by the mother. Of the home deliveries 95% were assisted by traditional birth attendant.

Poor standard of living including low educational level and deficiencies in the health care delivery system were strongly associated with home deliveries in Thampalakamam. Improvement of living condition and strengthening maternal and child health services can reduce the number of home deliveries in this area. Special attention should be paid to older mothers with high parity and who had a previous home delivery.