Abstract

This descriptive cross-sectional study was carried out to assess maternal weight gain and to determine selected factors associated with maternal weight gain in mothers attending ante-natal clinics in the Medical Officer of Health (MOH) area of Municipal Council (MC) Galle.

Many socio-demographic factors relevant to pregnancy were looked into including, nutritional state and knowledge, attitude in relation to maternal weight gain.

This research was carried out in MOH area Galle M.C. The two stage sampling process selected 384 pregnant mothers. In the first stage 11 clinics were selected randomly from 22 maternal clinics in Municipal Council MOH area. In the second stage candidates who fitted the required criteria were included in the study.

Difference between the weights of the mothers before the14th week of gestation and weight after 37th week was considered as maternal weight gain. Weight gain before 14th week and after 37th week was regarded as negligible.

Average maternal weight gain in the study was 8.69kg with the standard deviation of 3.02kg weight gain ranging from3kg to 18kg of the study sample. 30.2 % gained less than 7kg while 34.3% gained more than 9kg and 34.3% mothers gained between 7kg and 9kg.

In the unvaried analysis, factors like BMI, and nutrition showed a positive and significant relationship with maternal weight gain. ($p<0.05$) Monthly income shows a highly significant gain. ($p<0.01$).

This study sample showed negative relationship of maternal weight gain with age and ethnicity.

In the multiple regression analysis, above mentioned factors like monthly income, BMI, nutrition level was statistically significant.

Home visits by Public Health Midwives (PHM) are highly positive influencing factors for awareness raising. The major source of information on weight gain during pregnancy was the PHM and the majority of services were received from local ANC clinics.

The incidence of Low Birth Weight (LBW) decreased with mother's ages. It was highest in the < 19 years age group and declined, thereafter, incidence of LBW increase with age, suggesting that elderly women were more prone to produce LBW babies, although one would expect a significant rise in the incidence of LBW among grand multies. The study result showed marginal criteria.

It is recommended that greater emphasis should be given to health education in the field and local clinics by using correct IEC. Home visits by PHM should be promoted to reach every household. The health volunteers could be used for this purpose. Counseling, increased access to knowledge regarding proper nutrition, adequate rest during pregnancy, importance of family planning and developing a system to recommend maternal weight gain based on BMI were proposed as measures to reduce the incidence of low birth weight babies and to uplift health of mothers after delivery.