ABSTRACT

Introduction : Influenza is a highly infectious respiratory disease, causing a considerable amount of morbidities and mortalities around the world annually. Pregnant women are at higher risk of acquiring the disease and complications. Adhering to preventive measures during pregnancy provide protection against influenza.

Objectives : To identify and describe the maternal awareness (knowledge and attitudes), practices and associated factors on seasonal influenza for preventive measures during pregnancy among pregnant women attending antenatal clinics (ANC) in Medical Officer of Health (MOH) area Gampaha.

Methods : A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted among 485 pregnant women, attending antenatal clinics in MOH area Gampaha. Cluster sampling method was used to recruit pregnant women. An interviewer administered questionnaire was used to gather information. SPSS version 21 was used to analyze data. Results were summarized using frequency tables, measures of central tendency and measures of dispersion. Associations between maternal awareness, practices and associated factors were analyzed using chi square test.

Results : Response rate was 100%. Majority of pregnant women (65.2%) were included in age category of 26 to 35. Most of them (96.3%) were educated up to O/Ls while 62.7% were unemployed. Majority (46.6%) were in second trimester, in first pregnancy (44.7%) and without known pregnancy complications currently (85.8%).

Majority had "good" knowledge (70.7%) on seasonal influenza prevention. Majority had "good" attitudes (88.7%) and "good" practices (88%) on seasonal influenza prevention. A significant association was observed between higher age groups (> 25 years) and "good" knowledge level (p <0.001), between higher educational level (above O/Ls) and "good" knowledge level (p <0.001) and between employed category and "good" knowledge level (p < 0.001).
Presence of past individual history of influenza (p = 0.001) and past family history of influenza (p < 0.001) during past one-year period were significantly associated with "good" knowledge level. A significant association was observed between higher age category (>25 years) and "good" attitudes (p < 0.001) and between higher education level (above O/Ls) and "good" attitudes (p <0.001).

A significant association was observed between knowledge level and attitudes level where women with higher knowledge on seasonal influenza had higher percentage of "good" attitudes ($p < 0.001$) and women with higher knowledge on seasonal influenza had higher percentage of "good" practices ($p = 0.031$).

Conclusion and recommendation: Pregnant women's knowledge, attitude and practices towards prevention of seasonal influenza was good and need to improve further.