

EXCECUTIVE SUMMARY

Among healthcare settings, antenatal clinics play a pre-dominant role as it provides essential health care during pregnancy. The objective of this study was to improve the process and practices of antenatal clinics at De Soysa Maternity Hospital as it is the premier institution which introduces maternity care to Sri Lanka. The study was an institution based interventional project. The Mixed method was used including direct observations, document reviews, and key informant interviews with 18 identified officials and performance check list to identify the gaps in existing process and practices. Satisfaction survey was conducted among the pregnant mothers on selected attributes of antenatal education they receive, waiting time, adherence of clinic activities to the COVID-19 guidelines, health staff communication with pregnant women and basic facilities available. Absence of COVID-19 risk mitigation protocol, long waiting time and lack of antenatal education were identified as the prioritized gaps during pre-intervention period. Modifications were introduced to the existing process flow and a COVID-19 risk mitigation clinic protocol was introduced as the interventions. The results indicated that, the waiting time has been significantly reduced at post intervention at 95% confidence level ($p < 0.05$). Pregnant women's satisfaction on health education, waiting time, adherence of clinic activities to the COVID-19 guidelines was significantly improved after interventions ($p < 0.05$). No significant difference was shown in health staff communication with pregnant women and the basic facilities available. Satisfaction of health staff on applied interventions was satisfactory. Antenatal care in COVID-19 pandemic is challenging yet essential and therefore, protocol based approach will be a key to manage antenatal clinics amidst the pandemic while mitigating the risk. Study recommends introducing a computerized system to reduce the manual workload carried out by the staff. It also recognizes the

importance of improving infrastructure facilities and enhancement of personal skills of health staff such as effective communication through training.

Keywords: Antenatal Care, Waiting time, Health education, COVID-19 risk mitigation