

DETERMINANTS OF UTILIZATION OF ANTENATAL CARE OFFERED BY HEALTH PROFESSIONALS IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA. A CASE STUDY OF CENTRAL UGANDA

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to establish the determinants of antenatal care offered by Health Professionals in Sub-Saharan Africa taking a case study of central Uganda. A sample of 1583 women of reproductive age group of 15-49 was selected from the main dataset of 2006 Uganda Demographic and Health Survey from which all the analysis were derived from. Overall, the extent of maternal health care seeking behavior in central Uganda is low (antenatal care, assisted by doctors with higher level of education were only 21 percent) but with marked variations across women's demographic and socio-economic characteristics. Mother's age at birth, place of residence, education and wealth quintile, religion, marital status and employment status were used as predictor variables of utilization of antenatal care. Appropriate ante-natal care services promote safe-motherhood and delivery with improved maternal and neonatal outcome. Bivariate analysis demonstrates the difference in the utilization of health care services and women's demographic and socio - economic characteristics. Except religion and marital status, all variables cross tabulated under the influence of Pearson chi-square test appeared to be acceptable at 5% level of significance. Socio-economic variables such as education, residence, wealth index and employment status were implicated most strongly in women's utilization of health care services, as seen in the strong positive relationship between utilization of health care services and women's education as well as employment status of women. On the basis of the empirical findings, to improve the utilization of antenatal care services, it is suggested that comprehensive efforts have to be made through general sensitization of the masses especially spouses on the need to go for at least 4 visits. Putting up seminars increases awareness, Besides, this research calls for continued investment in female education and enforcing the empowerment of women especially through job creation would improve their income status, since lower wealth index was associated with low utilization of antenatal services which are indispensable for improving utilization of antenatal care services. Further coordinated efforts should be made on extending health facility to rural areas which would increase the utilization of antenatal service since most quality health centers are in urban areas.

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