



Awareness of Pregnant Women Attending Antenatal Clinics in Ibadan about the Effects of Oral Changes on Pregnancy and Pregnancy Outcomes

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Introduction

Pregnancy brings about unique physical and psychological changes in women, which can have adverse effects on oral health.¹

These changes include increased blood flow, heightened mouth acidity, and hormonal shifts, leading to conditions like pregnancy gingivitis, periodontitis, tooth erosion, tooth mobility, pregnancy tumors, dry mouth, and dental caries.¹

Gingivitis is the most common oral change during pregnancy, often progressing to periodontitis if left untreated.²

The oral conditions that may arise during pregnancy may be prevented through good oral hygiene practices and regular visits to the dentist.² Regular dental examinations before and during pregnancy help dentists identify and address oral issues promptly, ensuring optimal oral health for both the mother and the baby. It is, however, uncertain if pregnant women in Ibadan are aware of the oral changes associated with pregnancy and the effect of oral conditions on pregnancy and pregnancy outcomes.²

In addition, it is also unknown if these women are knowledgeable about the ways of preventing or treating the oral conditions. This becomes important due to the recent evidence about the possible association between oral diseases and pregnancy outcomes², hence, making this study very important.

Findings from this study will provide baseline data that would be used to plan appropriate interventions for pregnant women to promote good oral health among them.

Aim

This study aims to assess the level of awareness of the effects of oral changes on pregnancy and pregnancy outcomes among pregnant women attending antenatal clinics in Ibadan.

Objectives

1. To assess the level of awareness of pregnant women attending antenatal clinics in Ibadan about oral changes during pregnancy.
2. To assess the knowledge of pregnant women attending antenatal clinics in Ibadan about the potential effects of oral health on pregnancy outcomes.
3. To determine the knowledge of pregnant women attending antenatal clinics in Ibadan about ways of preventing or treating oral changes during pregnancy.

Methodology

A cross-sectional study using convenience sampling method will be conducted among Pregnant women attending the antenatal clinics of the University College Hospital, Oluyoro Catholic Hospital and Adeoyo State Hospital, Ibadan. The determined sample size is 280. The data for the study will be collected via pretested structured, paper-based questionnaires, which will be self-administered or interviewer-administered to the

consenting study participants after ethical approval for the study has been obtained. The questionnaire will be translated to the local language (Yoruba) for ease of communication with those who do not understand English. Data will be collected from participants by trained dental students (my colleagues and I) and analysis of the data will be done using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) version 27.

The questionnaire will contain three sections:

- **SECTION A:** Assesses information on the sociodemographic data of the participants such as age, level of education, income etc.
- **SECTION B:** It will include questions regarding the study participants' obstetrics characteristics or history such as the number of pregnancies, number of deliveries, if they went to an antenatal care clinic for previous pregnancies and the month to start the care for pregnancy.
- **SECTION C:** It will include questions regarding general oral health knowledge of the oral changes during pregnancy and preventive or treatment options as reported by the pregnant women such as; awareness of the importance of regular dental check-ups during pregnancy, the use of any additional oral care products, such as mouthwash or fluoride supplements.

Outcomes

Pretest

The questionnaire will be pretested among 14 pregnant women at Adeoyo Hospital, Oluyole, Ringroad, Ibadan. The response obtained during the pretest will be used to modify the questions.

Work schedule

April 8 – April 14: Data collection
April 15 – April 22: Data analysis

Expected Results

I expect to determine the level of awareness of oral changes and its effects on pregnant women.

Conclusion

Untreated oral diseases impact on both pregnant women, pregnancy outcomes and the well-being of the offspring. This study will provide the needed evidence on current level of awareness of pregnant women in Ibadan about; oral changes in pregnancy, its effect on pregnancy outcomes and ways of preventing or treating oral conditions during pregnancy to plan effective interventions to promote oral health among pregnant women as well as inform policy about oral health and antenatal care. The need for this education is crucial, indicating a potential link to a low level of awareness regarding the oral manifestations of pregnancy among expectant mothers. Recognizing that treatment is provided to both the pregnant patient and her unborn child underscores the importance of addressing this knowledge gap, suggesting that an oral health education program for pregnant women could be instrumental in enhancing awareness and promoting better oral health during pregnancy.

References

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