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REVIEW ARTICLE

Effectiveness of Antenatal Care in Reducing Maternal Mortality

Shivani[1], Sonia Singh[2]

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ABSTRACT

Globally, maternal mortality is still a serious public health issue, especially in underdeveloped nations. By offering early detection, prevention, and therapy of pregnancy-related problems, antenatal care (ANC) is a crucial intervention meant to improve mother and fetal outcomes. Timely detection of high-risk illnesses such anemia, hypertension, infections, and gestational diabetes is ensured by effective prenatal care.

The usefulness of prenatal care in lowering maternal mortality is highlighted in this review, which also underscores the significance of high-quality care, sufficient visits, and knowledgeable healthcare assistance. Pregnancy outcomes and maternal survival are greatly enhanced by appropriate prenatal care, according to data from numerous research.

KEYWORD:

• Antenatal Care • Maternal Mortality • Effectiveness • Pregnancy • Maternal Health • Early Detection • Health Education • Public Health

INTRODUCTION

When a woman dies during pregnancy, giving birth, or within 42 days after ending her pregnancy due to pregnancy-related issues, it is referred to as maternal mortality. Maternal mortality remains a significant problem despite improvements in healthcare, particularly in areas with limited resources.

The regular medical care given to expectant mothers in order to track their pregnancy's development and spot any issues early is known as antenatal care. Clinical evaluations, lab tests, health education, and nutritional support are all included. Antenatal care is essential for lowering maternal morbidity and mortality and is a crucial point of entry for maternal healthcare services.

AUTHOR'S AFFILIATION:

[1] Assistant Professor, Galgotias School of Nursing, Galgotias University, Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh, India.

[2] Professor, Galgotias School of Nursing, Galgotias University, Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh, India.

CORRESPONDING AUTHOR:

Shivani, Assistant Professor, Galgotias School of Nursing, Galgotias University, Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh, India.

E-mail: shivani.son@galgotiasuniversity.edu.in

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Antenatal care focuses on preventive, promotive, and curative aspects of maternal health. It involves:

- Early registration of pregnancy
- Regular antenatal visits
- Screening for high-risk conditions
- Immunization (e.g., tetanus toxoid)
- Nutritional supplementation (iron and folic acid)
- Health education and counseling

The World Health Organization recommends a minimum of eight antenatal contacts to ensure optimal maternal and fetal outcomes.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Several research studies have highlighted the effectiveness of antenatal care in reducing maternal mortality.

Carroli *et al.* demonstrated that structured antenatal care programs help in early detection and management of pregnancy complications, thereby reducing maternal deaths.[1]

Villar *et al.* conducted a WHO randomized trial which showed that focused antenatal care, even with fewer visits, can effectively prevent adverse maternal outcomes if the quality of care is maintained.[2]

Say et al. reported that the leading causes of maternal mortality, including hemorrhage, hypertensive disorders, and sepsis, can be prevented or managed effectively through timely antenatal interventions.[3]

Kuhnt and Vollmer found that women who attended at least four antenatal visits had significantly lower maternal mortality rates compared to those who did not receive adequate care.[4]

Singh *et al.* highlighted that lack of antenatal care in India is strongly associated with increased maternal mortality, particularly in rural populations.[5]

Campbell and Graham emphasized that antenatal care promotes institutional delivery and access to skilled birth attendants, which are essential for reducing maternal deaths.[6]

The World Health Organization (WHO) recommended increasing antenatal contacts to improve early detection of complications and enhance maternal survival rates.[7]

Lincetto *et al.* reported that antenatal interventions such as iron supplementation, immunization, and infection screening significantly reduce maternal morbidity and mortality.[8]

DISCUSSION

The body of research makes it abundantly evident that prenatal care is essential to lowering maternal mortality. Early registration and routine monitoring aid in the early detection of problems such infections, anemia, and preeclampsia. Improved maternal health is further facilitated by preventive interventions like immunization and dietary support.

Additionally, antenatal care encourages prompt healthcare-seeking behavior and increases pregnant women's understanding of warning indicators. Additionally, it lowers the hazards associated with home births by increasing the likelihood of institutional delivery. However, in many areas, obstacles like low knowledge, difficult access, socioeconomic considerations, and insufficient healthcare infrastructure continue to restrict the use of prenatal treatments.

CONCLUSION

Antenatal care is an essential component of maternal healthcare that significantly reduces maternal mortality. Quality antenatal services ensure early diagnosis, timely intervention, and continuous monitoring of pregnancy. Strengthening antenatal care services, improving accessibility, and increasing awareness among women are crucial steps toward reducing maternal deaths and improving overall maternal health outcomes.

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