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Project Title : Knowledge, Perception and Attitudes of Women on
Postnatal Care Utilisation in Chiwundura Communal
Areas

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment for the degree of Masters in Midwifery Education at the National University of Science and Technology

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ABSTRACT

Postnatal period is a very critical stage for both the mothers and their babies. The importance of postnatal care services has been established in various studies globally. Yet postpartum care is the most neglected aspect of women's health care, not only in developing countries but also in some developed countries. In Chiwundura 37% of postpartum mothers do not receive postnatal care at all.

A qualitative research was carried out using focus group discussions and interviews. The target population for the study were women in the reproductive age, living in Chiwundura. Purposive sampling was employed to recruit the participants. The researcher moderated all discussions. The study was completed by 51 women who participated in semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions carried out in eight clinics in Chiwundura communal areas. Questions that were asked generated information about the mothers' knowledge on postnatal care services; mothers' perception of postnatal care utilisation and their attitude toward postnatal care as well as barriers to utilisation of the postnatal services.

Some of the key findings of the study were that most women knew about postnatal care although some of them lacked awareness about postnatal care services. Those who knew about these services only knew about immunisation, growth monitoring and family planning services. The majority of the mothers did not know about other services, such as, counselling and physical examination. Lack of money for transport, distance from the health care facility, not being aware of the services, lack of somebody to take care of the child at home were some of the main barriers to utilisation of postnatal care services.

Women were of the view that postnatal care service is poor as much attention was given to their babies and the women themselves were not being examined. Professionals like midwives and nurses were cited as having a bad attitude towards women.

The ministry of health should educate women and communities about the importance of postnatal care, its availability, and the importance of women having decision-making power over their own health. The health service providers should improve on the quality of care by ensuring that services are provided at convenient hours with privacy, confidentiality and respect.

Key words: knowledge, perception, attitudes, postnatal care, utilisation, Zimbabwe