

ABSTRACT

A study was carried out among males at Holy Cross Orthodox Hospital Namungoona with the purpose of identifying the factors influencing male involvement in the uptake of antenatal services. A cross-sectional design employing both qualitative and quantitative means of data collection was used and simple random sampling technique was used to select 100 participants. A self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data from respondents and SPSS version was used for data analysis.

The results showed that respondents had varying levels of knowledge on ANC. Although 50 (50%) said it was important for male partners to participate in ANC as 30 (60%) said it was important as it enabled them to know the health status of their partners, 20 (40%) said it was important as it helped check the development of the pregnancy, most respondents 45 (45%) did not know the right period at which to start making antenatal care visits as a couple. However, most respondents 70 (70%) understood antenatal care as the care given to a mother in hospital from the time of conception to delivery of the baby and were aware of the services provided to mothers including 50 (50%) who mentioned health education as a service which took place during antenatal care, followed by 26 (26%) who mentioned checking of blood pressure.

Respondents also faced various socio-cultural factors influencing male involvement in ANC services. Although 60 (60%) said it was not okay to escort their partners to the antenatal clinic, 30 (30%) respondents who said the community looked at them as people who were bewitched by their wives, 20 (20%) said they were looked at show offs while the least 10 (10%) said they were looked at as being weak. Furthermore, most respondents perceived their involvement in ANC differently as 40 (40%) said their role during pregnancy was to provide funds to ensure good feeding and transport to the health facilities, 20 (20%) encouraging and motivating partners to attend ANC and 10 (10%) offering continued supportive care. Only 30 (30%) respondents mentioned escorting their partners to ANC clinics which was not surprising as 60 (60%) reported that some males felt ashamed and embarrassed to attend ANC with their partners.

Respondents also faced various health facility factors influencing male participation in ANC. Although 90 (90%) reported that health workers had positive attitudes towards receiving men in the ANC, respondents still encountered various health facility factors which influenced male participation in ANC. Among these included 50 (50%) lack of privacy in ANC sessions, 70 (70%) long waiting time, 30 (30%) long queues, 22 (22%) limited space, 18 (18%) marginalizing of men, 15 (15%) having a lot of requirements, 10 (10%) harsh language used by health workers and 5 (5%) unofficial fees among others.

In conclusion, despite possessing some knowledge about the importance of ANC as well as the various services offered to mothers during ANC, most males had never escorted their partners to attend ANC services and this was attributed to various socio-cultural and health facility factors influencing male participation in ANC, hence it required interventions to alleviate these factors and ensure male involvement and participation in ANC.