

ABSTRACT

The study was carried out in Kawolo general hospital (KGH), a government hospital in central Uganda with a major objective of investigating the utilization of postpartum/postnatal care services. The survey was completed by 160 women. Mother's knowledge about postnatal services, socio-economic status and hindrance to utilization of the postnatal were sought. The participants included all women who delivered at KGH and those at the PNC clinic in October 2014. Convenient sampling method was used. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. Qualitative and quantitative approaches were also employed in the process of analyzing data.

Low utilization of PNC services at KGH was observed where 38.8% (62) of postpartum women attended. Those who knew about these services only knew about immunization and family planning services.

The majority of the mothers did not know about other services, such as screening for infections and cervical cancer, counseling, child growth monitoring and physical examination. Lack of money for transport, distance from the health care facility for a few respondents, not being aware of the services, not being advised to attend the clinic, those who felt well and not seeing any need to attend PNC clinic were some of the main barriers to utilization of postnatal services. Others included lack of education, lack of employment and lack of decision making powers for those who had to seek for permission before attending the clinic among others.

The study revealed that quality of postnatal care services and attendance of the postnatal visits was low. Improvements should be focused on involving clients in decision making, providing postnatal services as a package which solves problems of omitting important aspects such as physical examination, Pap smear and urine testing.

There is also need to improve the number and availability of health care providers in the labor ward and postnatal clinics to reduce time of wait before getting to be served or seen by a health service provider. The ministry of health and other organizations involved in health care provision should educate women and communities about the importance of postnatal care, it's availability, and the importance of women having decision making power over their own health in addition to improving the quality of care by ensuring that services are provided at convenient hours with privacy, confidentiality and respect. Evaluating services periodically to suit individual needs of women to maintain the quality of services offered during the PNC visit.