

The objective of the study was to determine factors influencing adherence to iron-folate supplements among pregnant women aged 19-45 years attending ANC at Fort Portal Regional Referral Hospital, Kabarole district.

A cross-sectional study as a methodology was carried out through employing both quantitative and qualitative approaches to investigate the research problem through closed and open ended questions. Data was collected from the maternal and child health unit randomly with emphasis put on seeking participants characteristic variations on socio-demographic, individual and health facility related factors. Targeted respondents were pregnant women of age between 19-45 years attending ANC in Fort Portal Regional Referral Hospital, Kabarole district. The total sample selected for participations was 111.

Data was entered into EPIDATA and exported to SPSS version 21 for analysis. Bivariate analysis was conducted to identify factors associated with adherence to iron-folate supplements. Correlations were used to determine directions of relationships while a Chi-square, p-value of <0.05 with CI at 95% were considered to justify and association between the dependent and independent variable. Major determinants of adherence to iron-folate were marital status, education and income levels, pregnancy needs and effects of etiological anaemia and folic acid deficiencies. Marital status significantly relates ($p=0.001$) with iron-folate uptake, married participants are more fond of taking iron-folate supplements. Education level negatively related with adherence to iron-folate supplements ($p=0.045$, $r=0.41$), majority of women who adhere are of primary level. Income level equally related with ($p=0.032$, $r=0.52$) iron-folate intake negatively in a way that low income earners are more involved in uptake of the supplements.

Pregnancy needs, effects of etiological anemia and deficiencies of folic acid are significantly associated ($p=0.321$, 0.021 , 0.022 respectively).

In conclusion, Compliance to iron-folate supplements was low among pregnant women; the compliance was at 31.5%. Factors positively significantly associated with adherence include: Socio-economic factors such as marital status, level of education and income levels, individual factors like awareness on pregnancy needs, effects of etiological anemia and iron-folate deficiencies. However, the study results also revealed that health facility factors do not influence adherence to iron-folate supplements.

Recommendations; the tendency to consume supplements at pregnancy is noticed as women get educated by health personnel who put across effects of etiological anemia and deficiencies of folic acid coupled with improved nutrition, need for early ANC attendance and follow up. Such motivations from the health personnel increase the chances of adherence to iron-folate supplements among pregnant

women attending ANC.