A STUDY TO ASSESS THE KNOWLEDGE ON POST-NATAL NUTRITION OF PRIMIGRAVID WOMEN AT MT. DARWIN DISTRICT HOSPITAL.

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A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF A BACHELOR OF SCIENCE HONOURS DEGREE IN NURSING EDUCATION.

JULY 2013
Abstract

Realising that maternal nutrition is an important attribute of pregnancy outcome and child health, research and interventions should also target maternal nutrition. This should include finding ways of promoting nutrition and health awareness among mothers and the community at large. The prevalence of micronutrient deficiency is still high and it is mainly due to inadequate and inaccurate nutrition knowledge, coupled with ineffective nutrition education. The purpose of the study was to assess knowledge on post-natal nutrition of primigravid women at Mt. Darwin District Hospital. A nonexperimental research design was used in which information on knowledge on postnatal nutrition was gathered. A questionnaire was developed and validated in a sample of 10 primigravid women at Bindura Provincial hospital. This instrument was then administered to a separate sample of pregnant women (n=50) of similar demographics to assess nutrition knowledge. Informed verbal consent was obtained the women in Shona. Individual interviews using two-part structured questionnaire where demographic information and knowledge were assessed. Collected data was analysed using the Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) version 16. Permission to conduct the study was sought and granted by the Bindura University Health Sciences Department and from the District Medical Officer (D.M.O.) and hospital matron of Mt. Darwin Hospital. Major findings of the research were that pregnant women had little basic knowledge on nutrition as (68%) of the respondents could define nutrition. Only (48%) could identify food groups that form a balanced diet. They had no knowledge on sources of, proteins, iron and Vitamin A. Recommendations include further research in these areas which would assist to provide comprehensive nutrition education to empower pregnant and lactating women with knowledge. Focus should also be directed towards production and utilization of nutritious foods of different food groups.