

Healthy Pregnancy and Lactation

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Abstract: Mother is the origin of human life, whether she gives birth to male or a female baby. However only healthy mothers can produce healthy children. The foetus, which grows rapidly depends solely on its mother for the nourishment. Nutrition plays an important and special role in the course of pregnancy for the maintenance of sound maternal health.

Keywords: pregnancy, healthy mothers, healthy children, Nutrition, maternal health.

1. INTRODUCTION

Pregnancy is a physiological condition in which foetal growth is accompanied by intensive changes in maternal body composition and metabolism. Pregnancy is a period of considerable physiological and nutritional stress, during which the maternal requirements of almost all the nutrients are greatly increased. Pregnant women are considered as a vulnerable group because of increased physiological demands.

Nutrition plays an important and special role in the course of pregnancy for the maintenance of sound maternal health.

Hence, the study was undertaken to assess nutritional and health status of pregnant and lactating women in Parbhani Taluka with following objectives:

- 1) To evaluate the health and nutritional status of pregnant and lactating women by anthropometric measurements and clinical examination.
- 2) To evaluate the food and nutrient intake of the selected pregnant and lactating women.
- 3) To estimate the effect of education and income level on the nutritional status.
- 4) To study the comparative evaluation of nutritional status.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study entitled "Nutritional and Health Status of Pregnant and lactating women in Parbhani Taluka" was carried out on the randomly selected 300 pregnant and 200 lactating women from Parbhani Taluka of Marathwada region.

The data pertaining to the study were collected by personal interviewing the respondents, their family members, visiting their homes or hospitals. Further following 24 hours recall method and weighing method with questionnaire, for dietary and nutritional intake by taking anthropometric measurements was performed as per standard procedure.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A higher percent of the pregnant respondents from both rural and urban area belonged to the nuclear type of family and were vegetarian, whereas the majority of the urban respondents were college educated, high SES groups and occupied in professional jobs, in service or in their own business, however the opposite results were seen for the rural area that is more rural respondents were educated up to middle school, belonging in low SES group and occupied as laborer and skilled worker only.

Among the selected pregnant women, the practice of three meal pattern was common. The respondents were found to be not fulfilling their dietary requirement, specially their diet were found to be deficit in leafy vegetable, milk and milk products, fruits etc.

The average meal pattern of the lactating respondents was three meal pattern. Very few from rural and urban area consumed mid-morning food and snacks in their diet. Only plain preparation such as plain dhal and milk was used and avoided spicy, hot food.

The special foods which were found to be included in the diet of pregnant women were fruits, milk, leafy vegetables, eggs, non-veg and tomato. The reasons expressed were "doctors advice", "good for health", "reduce weakness" and "increases blood"

In lactation period the food like milk, eggs, poppy seeds and leafy vegetables were included.

During pregnancy period majority of the pregnant women were found to have one or the other ailments, such as loss of appetite, pain in calf muscle, back pain, oedema, blood pressure, anemic condition, headache, weakness and nausea etc. Anaemic condition, vomiting and weakness were the major health problems found in the pregnant women irrespective of their SES and living area.

Among lactating women back pain, weakness, stomach pain, anaemic condition, vomittings and piles were the health problems reported by the respondents. The results indicated that most of the rural lactating women back pain, weakness and anaemic conditions. The reasons behind them may be low food intake and lack of sufficient nutrients in daily diet.

4. CONCLUSION

It is clear from this study that nutrition plays an important and special role in the course of pregnancy for the maintenance of sound maternal health. Hence, the requirement of nutrients for women during pregnancy increases significantly in order to meet the extra demands for rapid growth and development of foetus.

For healthy pregnancy and lactation nutrition plays an important role.

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