Factors Influencing Persistent Utilization of Traditional Birth Attendants by Expectant Women in Kimilili Division, Bungoma County, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to explore factors influencing persistent utilization of traditional birth attendants (TBAs) by expectant women in Kimilili Division. Documented evidence shows that 56 percent of pregnancy deliveries are assisted by TBAs in Kenya, 26 percent in public facilities and 10 percent in private facilities in the Kenya Demographic Health Survey 2008-09. This study was motivated by the emerging need to improve maternal health services in the modern society. The question on whether or not to involve (TBAs) in maternal mortality reduction (MMR) has been a re-emerging theme since independence. In attempt to explain these discrepancies, this study aimed to assess whether TBAs around Kimilili Division are effectively playing the role of promoting safe motherhood and further identify ways to further improve their services. The specific objectives of this study were to explore whether TBAs perform the functions of screening for risk factors, referring high risk patients, perform successful deliveries and offer family planning information, to describe the social and cultural factors that influenced utilization of TBAs by mothers and how this relates to current maternal and child health services, it assessed the level of interaction of TBAs with the modern sector and how this compliments with the provision of maternal health services, to explore strategies that would enhance the role played by TBAs on safe motherhood in the study area and lastly, it explained the challenges faced by TBAs while performing their duties. This study was guided by Rational Choice Theory and Health Belief Model. Descriptive survey design was used. A hundred people were sampled using purposive sampling: snowball method from the study area. Interview schedules were used to collect data from respondents. Data collected from the field was analysed using SPSS. Analysed data was presented using pie-charts, percentages and frequency tables. Findings of this study indicate that (98%) TBAs are consulted widely on maternal and child health issues in Kimilili Division. However, the current numbers of trained TBAs are inadequate and cannot meet the needs of the community including screening for risk factors, referring high risk patients, delivery and family planning. The study concludes that without deployment of adequate numbers of trained health workers for promotion of safe motherhood, TBAs remain vital for the rural and urban community in need of maternal and child health care services. This study recommends the need for close supportive supervision and evaluation of the trainings so the TBAs can greatly contribute to decreasing maternal and new born mortality rates.
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