

Oral presentations
Theme 1: Mothers and Children

OP6

Participation in pre-pregnancy counselling among primi women attending antenatal clinics at Teaching Hospital Jaffna

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Background and objective: Preconception counselling is an important component of reproductive healthcare. Preconception care includes the provision of biomedical, behavioural, and social health interventions to women and couples before conception occurs. This study aimed to describe participation in pre-pregnancy counselling and determine the factors associated with participation among primiparous women attending the antenatal clinics of Teaching Hospital Jaffna.

Methods: This descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted among all primiparous women (n=338) who attended the antenatal clinics at Teaching Hospital Jaffna from October to December 2019. Data were collected using an interviewer-administered questionnaire. Data were entered in EpiData software. Descriptive and inferential statistical analysis was performed using SPSS software.

Results: The response rate was 85% (288/338). Mean age of the participants was 25.7 (± 4.4) years. Majority were housewives (84.4%, n=243), Hindus (76.7%, n=221) and not educated beyond GCE O/L (59.4%, n=171). In the sample, 160 (55.6%) participants had received pre-pregnancy counselling, and 112 (38.9%) had been registered in the Eligible Couple Register before pregnancy. Being registered in the Eligible Couple Register was associated with a greater likelihood of participation in pre-pregnancy counselling (p=0.009), pre-pregnancy folic acid supplementation (<0.001), and pre-pregnancy anthropometric measurement (p<0.001). Women with an educational level above GCE O/L were more likely to participate in pre-pregnancy counselling (p=0.004) and receive pre-pregnancy folic-acid supplementation (p<0.001).

Conclusion: Participation in pre-pregnancy counselling is suboptimal and needs more attention in Jaffna. Being registered in the Eligible Couple Register and having a higher education level is associated with a greater likelihood in participating in pre-pregnancy counselling. Measures should be taken by medical officers of health to improve the rate of registration of eligible couples.

Keywords: Preconception Counselling, Primiparous Women, Antenatal Care, Pregnancy Registration, Teaching Hospital Jaffna