

Factors Affecting the Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices on Hypertensive Disorders of Pregnancy Among Pregnant Women with Risk Factors: A Cross-Sectional Study in a Tertiary Care Centre

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Hypertensive disorders of pregnancy (HDP), including preeclampsia are among the top five causes of maternal deaths worldwide. Women with risk factors for preeclampsia are more likely to experience more severe complications of HDP. Having better awareness on HDP could result in improved outcomes in these women. Therefore, the objectives of this study were to assess the knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) on HDP among pregnant women with high or moderate risk factors for preeclampsia and to identify demographic factors that may affect KAP scores. A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted among 229 pregnant women with at least one high or moderate risk factor for preeclampsia from obstetric clinics, Teaching Hospital Peradeniya. Convenience sampling method was used. A pretested, interviewer-administered questionnaire was used to collect data. Knowledge score $>80\%$ was considered as good. Scores of $> 50\%$ in attitudes and practices were considered as positive and good, respectively. Data are presented as mean $\pm$ standard deviation (SD), median (interquartile range, IQR) and percentages. Associations between demographic variables and the domains of knowledge, attitude and practice were assessed using the Chi-squared test. Mean age of the participants was 30 ± 5 years and the median period of amenorrhea was 24 (14-32) weeks. Majority (77%) were primi mothers and 11% had at least one high risk factor. Good knowledge was seen among 74%, all had positive attitudes but only 21% engaged in good practices. Knowledge score was higher in women educated at least up to A/Ls (77%vs60%; $p=0.020$), monthly income $> \text{Rs. } 60,000/=$ (78%vs64%; $p = 0.026$) and those who participated in antenatal counselling sessions (79%vs61%; $p = 0.004$). Only 42% were aware regarding all 5 red flag symptoms of preeclampsia with a greater percentage of multiparous women having awareness compared to primi mothers (57%vs32%; $p = 0.001$). No associations were identified with attitudes or practices. These findings suggest that there is a considerable gap between knowledge and practices despite positive attitudes among pregnant women regarding HDP. Developing targeted health education programs to improve knowledge and addressing factors for not adhering to good practices could improve the outcome of HDP.

Keywords: HDP, preeclampsia, awareness, antenatal counselling

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