

## **Prevalence of low birth weight and associated maternal factors in Vellavelly Medical Officers of Health area**

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The World Health Organization (WHO) defined Low Birth Weight (LBW) as a condition where the weight at birth of a baby is less than 2500 grams. LBW is a major determinant of prenatal survival, infant morbidity and mortality as well as the risk of developmental disabilities and illness throughout future lives. This study provides information on the prevalence of low birth weight and associated maternal factors in the Vellavelly Medical Officer of Health (MOH) area from 2012 January to 2014 December. The main objective of this study was to investigate the prevalence and associated maternal factors of low birth weight. Specific objectives were to evaluate the prevalence of low birth weight and to determine the association between the prevalence of low birth weight with maternal age, maternal hemoglobin level, gestational weight gain and maternal Body Mass Index (BMI).

A retrospective cross-sectional study was done in singleton pregnant women to find out the prevalence of LBW and associated maternal factors at the Vellavelly MOH area, 319 birth details were randomly extracted among all birth records from January 2012 to December 2014 in all 15 Public Health Midwife (PHM) areas in Vellavelly MOH division. The secondary data source was the maternal registered book of the Vellavelly MOH. Maternal age, maternal haemoglobin level, weight, height, pre delivery weight and birth weight of newborn were the collected data.

The prevalence in the present study was 27.3%. Maternal hemoglobin levels and maternal weight gain were analyzed with LBW by using the chi – square test. The chi- square p-value of the analysis was 0.009 and 0.004 respectively. Maternal hemoglobin and gestational weight gain are associated factors with low birth weight. Implementing health education programs and health care quality delivered to pregnant women and consequently supplementation of iron and nutritional tablets may reduce the chances of the birth of low birth weight neonates.