

This study is designed to investigate the factors influencing prenatal health status among women attending prenatal clinics in selected low income areas of Nairobi, Kenya. The main purpose is therefore to establish the prenatal health status of pregnant women in low income areas and how this has contributed toward the healthy development of the unborn baby.

Literature reviewed indicates that there is an increase in both maternal and infant mortality rates among low income women, and the most affected are women living in urban slums of Nairobi, Kenya. The literature further indicates that accessibility in terms of escalating costs of obtaining adequate health care and poor infrastructure are among the main factors that lead to poor prenatal status of the expectant women. However, based on the Safe Motherhood conceptual framework, there is need to improve the health status of the expectant women.

Variables attributed to prenatal health status that this study addressed include: prenatal health conditions as a dependent variable, while age, level of education, number of visits attended, number of children, attitude of the pregnant women toward their pregnancy, partner support, family and community support, problems experienced and quality of prenatal health care offered at the clinic as independent variables. This study considered these variables to be influencing the prenatal health status of pregnant women in Kenya.

Four administrative divisions from the eastern part of Nairobi, Kenya were purposively selected. These four administrative divisions were: Mathare, Makadara, Starehe and Embakasi. The sample population of 170 pregnant women who ranged from 15-40 years was drawn from the six clinics randomly chosen from the four areas where the majority of low income people live.

The findings of this study therefore, indicated that number of children per respondent, and number of prenatal visits attended was negatively correlated with prenatal health conditions. The hypotheses were tested using regression analysis and the associated t-tests. The two variables including partner support were included in the regression equation as the main predictors of prenatal health status. Since good prenatal health conditions aim to improve birth outcomes, it is therefore important for the Government to take measures to improve infrastructure, encourage expectant women to take measures to improve infrastructure, encourage expectant women to attend prenatal clinics earlier in their pregnancies, and promote women's perceptions, family and the surrounding community.