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RESEARCH ARTICLE

STUDY ON AWARENESS REGARDING HIGH RISK FACTORS OF PREGNANCY AMONG
PREGNANT WOMEN

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ABSTRACT

A 'high risk pregnancy' sounds daunting, but like every other issue, knowledge is the key for coping with and treating the pregnancy with complications. Hence, a descriptive study was carried out to assess the awareness regarding high risk factors of pregnancy among 150 pregnant women selected by convenience sampling technique, visiting antenatal OPD of a selected hospital of Ludhiana, Punjab. A structured questionnaire was used to assess the socio-demographic variables along with the level of awareness. It was found that more than one-third (34.7%) of pregnant women had below average level of awareness, one-third of women (33.3%) had average level of awareness, (30%) had good level of awareness and only (2%) had excellent level of awareness. The score of respondents was higher in the area of age & parity (80%) and least in the area of abnormal presentation (34.5%). Source of information, parity, number of live children and history of complications in previous pregnancy had statistically significant impact ($p < 0.05$) on the level of awareness. The study concludes that the level of awareness regarding high risk factors of pregnancy was below average. Hence, dissemination of Information Education and Communication material was done to enhance the awareness.

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INTRODUCTION

For most women, early and regular prenatal care promotes a healthy pregnancy and delivery without complications. But some women are at an increased risk for complications even before they get pregnant for a variety of reasons. In some cases, pre-existing health problems can make pregnancies risky from the start. However, even normal pregnancies can become complicated when unforeseen conditions arise. A pregnancy is considered high risk when there are potential complications that could affect either the mother or the baby or both. Studies have shown that the greater incidence of mortality and morbidity due to high risk pregnancy is directly related to the inadequate knowledge of the women about the factors that put pregnancy at risk. So, the researcher felt the need to assess the level of awareness among pregnant women regarding the factors that put pregnancy at risk.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A descriptive research design was used to conduct the study in antenatal OPD of DMC & Hospital, Ludhiana, Punjab.

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The study was conducted on 150 pregnant women selected by convenience sampling technique. Data was collected by using structured questionnaire that comprised of two parts; part 1 consists of socio-demographic profile and maternal profile. Part 2 consists of Multiple choice Questions to assess the awareness regarding high risk factors of pregnancy. The research tool was validated by consulting experts from the field of Obstetric & Gynaecological Nursing, Medical Surgical Nursing and Community Health Nursing for content and language used and needed amendments were made after consultation with Supervisor & Co-Supervisor. Data obtained was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

RESULTS

Findings of the present study showed that half (50%) of the subjects belonged to the age group of 26-30 years. (42.7%) were qualified upto higher secondary. As per the educational status of their husbands, half of them (50.7%) were qualified upto higher secondary. More than two third of women (76.7%) were non-working. Regarding their husband's working status, majority of them (92%) were working. More than half of the subjects (54%) were residing in urban areas, near about half of women (47.3%) were Sikh, and more than half of pregnant

women (56.7%) were living in a joint family. As per the socio-economic status, more than half of the subjects (53.3%) belonged to lower middle class. More than two third of subjects (60.7%) had no source of information regarding high risk factors of pregnancy. As per the maternal profile, less than half of women (44%) were primigravida. More than half of subjects (54.7%) were nullipara. Likewise, more than half (54.7%) of women had no live child. More than two-third of women (78%) had no history of abortions. Maximum number of women (98.7%) had no previous still births. More than half of subjects (58.7%) were in second trimester of pregnancy. Majority of women (84%) had not encountered any complication in previous pregnancy and maximum number of pregnant women (90.7%) had no complication in present pregnancy as well.

Table 1. Distribution of pregnant women as per Level of awareness regarding high risk factors of pregnancy

N=150	
Level of awareness	f (%)
Excellent	03 (02.0)
Good	45 (30.0)
Average	50 (33.3)
Below average	52 (34.7)

Table 1 describes the Percentage distribution of pregnant women as per level of awareness regarding high risk factors of pregnancy. It shows that more than one-third (34.7%) of pregnant women had below average level of awareness, one-third of women (33.3%) had average level of awareness, (30%) had good level of awareness and only (2%) had excellent awareness level.

Table 2. Mean and Mean percentage awareness score of pregnant women regarding high risk factors of pregnancy according to areas of awareness

Areas of awareness	Maximum score	Awareness score		
		Mean \pm SD	%	Rank
Age & Parity	2	1.60 \pm 0.601	80.00	1
Introduction	2	1.55 \pm 0.641	77.00	2
Prevention	4	2.49 \pm 1.174	62.30	3
Antepartum/Postpartum haemorrhage	2	1.79 \pm 1.089	59.70	4
Anaemia	3	1.45 \pm 0.815	48.00	5
Thyroid disease	3	1.33 \pm 0.930	44.00	6
Height & Weight	4	1.74 \pm 0.982	43.00	7
Diabetes	4	1.69 \pm 1.148	42.00	8
Hypertension	3	1.08 \pm 1.052	36.00	9
Abnormal presentation	2	0.69 \pm 0.612	34.50	10

Table 2 shows the Mean and Mean percentage awareness score of antenatal women regarding high risk factors of pregnancy according to areas of awareness. It depicts that the score of respondents was higher in the area of age & parity (80%), followed by introduction (77%), prevention (62.3%), Antepartum/postpartum haemorrhage (59.7%), anaemia (48%), thyroid disease (44%), height & weight (43%), diabetes (42%), hypertension (36%) and least in the area of abnormal presentation (34.5%). The association of awareness regarding high risk factors of pregnancy among pregnant women with the source of information, parity, number of live children and history of complications in previous pregnancy was found to be statistically significant at $p < 0.05$.

DISCUSSION

In the present study, it was found that more than one-third (34.7%, $n = 150$) of pregnant women had below average level of awareness and only (2%) had excellent awareness level. In contrast to present findings, Mosha TCE, Philemon N. (2009) in Morogoro Municipality, Tanzania found that majority of the pregnant women ($> 70%$, $n = 157$) were aware of the risk factors that could adversely affect the pregnancy outcomes. (Mosha TCE, 2009). In the present study, source of information, parity, number of live children and history of any complication in previous pregnancy had statistically significant impact ($p < 0.05$) on level of awareness regarding high risk factors of pregnancy among pregnant women. These findings were supported by Khezerdoust S et al (1998) who indicated that there was a significant relation between knowledge and parity ($P = 0.0001$) (Khezerdoust S, 1998).

Conclusion

The study concluded that (34.7%) of pregnant women had below average level of awareness regarding high risk factors of pregnancy. Pregnant women had highest level of awareness regarding age & parity (80.0%), followed by introduction, prevention, antepartum/postpartum haemorrhage, anaemia, thyroid disease, height & weight, diabetes, hypertension and lowest in the area of abnormal presentation (34.50%) as a high risk factor of pregnancy. Source of information, parity, number of live children and history of previous complicated pregnancy had significant impact on the level of awareness ($p < 0.05$). A similar study can be replicated on large sample and at different settings to validate and generalize its findings.

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Conflict of interest: None

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Ethical consideration: A written permission for conducting the study was taken from ethical committee of DMC & Hospital, Ludhiana as well as Principal, DMCH College of Nursing, Ludhiana before starting the study. An informed consent was obtained from each subject.

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