

**THE DETERMINANTS OF THE UTILIZATION OF
PRENATAL CARE SERVICES IN BHUTAN**

DEKI

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DEKI: 4838756 PRRH / M

M.A. (POPULATION AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH RESEARCH)

THESIS ADVISORS: AREE PHROMMO Ph.D.,
JOHN BRYANT Ph.D.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate whether women receive or do not receive prenatal care as well as the causes for underutilization of prenatal care services.

This study utilizes secondary data from the survey of 'Bhutan Living Standard Survey (BLSS), 2003, conducted by the National Statistical Bureau, Royal Government of Bhutan.

Univariate and bivariate analysis with chi-square test was used to identify the significant relationships between dependent and independent variables. Logistic regression was run to find the effect of each independent variable on the utilization of prenatal care service.

It is found that, controlling for other variables, respondent's knowledge of modern contraception and economic status exhibited significantly positive associated with the use of prenatal care services. About 94 % of women from high economic status have received prenatal care as against 62 % of the women from low economic status, which means rich women were three times more likely to receive prenatal care than their counterparts, 85 % of women with some knowledge of modern contraception utilized prenatal care services as against 68 % of women with no knowledge. Accessibility also related significantly to the use of prenatal care services; if the woman has to travel on foot and if she takes more than an hour to reach the health centre then she is less likely to receive prenatal care. While quality of care was not related to utilization of prenatal care, this could be because of free services and facilities provided by the government. Logistic regression result also showed that a high standard of living and knowledge of modern contraception were strong positive predictors of prenatal care.

Women of reproductive age need to recognize the importance of receiving antenatal care in the community. Uplifting the socio-economic status and literacy rate of women is required to provide community based education.

KEY WORDS: EXPOSURE MASS MEDIA/ PRENATAL/ANTENATAL CARE/
ECONOMIC STATUS/ KNOWLEDGE OF MODERN
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