

Knowledge on postnatal care among public health midwives

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Background - Postnatal care is often neglected area of maternity care and malpractice is associated with high morbidity and mortality.

Objective - To assess the midwives' knowledge on postnatal care and look into the practice.

Method - This study was done among half of the field midwives (random sampling) in each MOH area under Jaffna RDHS using self-administered closed pro forma based on latest Family Health Bureau guideline on maternal care for field healthcare workers. We assessed midwives' knowledge on proposed maternal care model, aim of postnatal care including breast feeding, nutrition, mental health, perineal care, and prevention of DVT, bladder, bowel care and neonatal care.

Results - Sixty-four public health midwives were participated in this study. All midwives knew about the aim of postnatal care and 90.6%(58/64) were aware about the proposed maternal care model. 67.2%(43/64) and 50%(32/64) of the participants knew the danger signs and symptoms in mothers and neonates respectively. Knowledge on symptoms and signs of deep vein thrombosis and pulmonary embolism were adequate in 60.94 %(39/64). Similarly, 60.94%(39/64) were confident on postnatal nutrition. Regarding breast feeding, 81.25%(52/64) have sound knowledge. Almost all has wide knowledge on postpartum mental health. Regarding the bladder & bowel care and perineal care 73.43%(47/64) and 93.75%(60/64) have adequate knowledge respectively.

Conclusion - Overall, midwives have average knowledge on postnatal care. Certain areas remain challenging. They should be educated on detection of danger symptoms and signs in both mother and baby and knowledge regarding nutrition during postnatal period. By improving knowledge on detection of danger symptoms and signs, early detection and timely intervention can ensure a better outcome for both mother and newborn.