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# **Information Need and Seeking Behaviour of Pregnant Women in Ughelli General Hospital, Delta State.**

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## **Abstract**

*This paper examined the topic on information needs and seeking behaviour of Pregnant Women in Ughelli General Hospital, Delta State to this end therefore, the researcher came up with four objectives which are: to identify the information needs of pregnant women in ughelli general hospital, to ascertain the information seeking behaviour of pregnant women in ughelli general hospital, to identify the information sources used by pregnant women in ughelli general hospital, to identify challenges pregnant women faced with when seeking for information. The paper succinctly outline some challenges that tend to hamper information needs and seeking behaviour of Pregnant Women in Ughelli General Hospital, Delta State and they are: erratic power supply , feeling shy asking information , finance Problem , I have childcare needs to take care of , I have family/household needs to take care of , I have no one to accompany me to the clinic, I have no one to discuss my pregnancy with , I have to wait a lot to see the doctor or healthcare professional , ignorance , inadequate functional PHC centre , it is too far to get to clinic , language barrier , my elders think their advice is enough , my partner is not involved, scarring of asking for information, the health staff attitude is not good, there is a lack of proper discussion by health professional. The study was concluded and the following recommendations were outlined which are: Since the information needs from this study has been identified, it is expedient that serious work by health practitioners should be done to ensure that these needs are adequately attended to so as to satisfy the yearning of pregnant women generally. The pregnant women should be exposed especially the literate ones to the use of Internet, library, radio as sources of accessing information that will better their lives during the pregnancy period. There should be adequate functional health centre, doctors should also make it easy for the pregnant women at this period of their pregnancy to easily access them without much constraint and the idea of tasking pregnant women aside the main charges that is required of them to pay should be discouraged and abolished by the health practitioners.*

**Keywords: Information; Information needs; Seeking behavior; Pregnant women**

## **Introduction**

Information is an essential commodity that no single human being here on earth can do without. It is likened to the heart of a human being, the day it stops beating, that being has stopped living so also the day information stops existing in a society that society is gradually fading away without knowing. There is this parlance that information rules the world no wonder Okolo (2021) likened it to a key that has the ability to open doors without restriction. According to Ajiboye and Tella (2007), information is data that has been processed to be well understood to satisfy the user's query. It is so vital that people who know its value, can do anything legitimate to have and secure it. Information is needed to be able to take a right decision and also reduce uncertainty.

Information is very important and it must be put to proper use. For meaningful information to be dispensed, some relevant information sources must be consulted and it is through those sources that information seekers can obtain information that is ideal for a meaningful decision making leading to increase in productivity

Pregnant women have a lot of information needs which usually prompt their demand for information. When pregnant women are searching for information to meet their needs, they use different sources of information. Pregnancy in women is not only a time of physical changes but also a period in a woman's health related behaviours that are relevant, as decisions taken during this period could affect the life of a mother and her unborn fetus. For pregnant women to adequately live a healthy life and ensure their safety and safe delivery of their babies, they need to search and acquire information necessary for healthy living. The search for information, however, starts with the identification of a gap in knowledge, for which the individual makes an effort to bridge. As noted by Allen (1996) information need occurs whenever an individual's

knowledge fails. Dervin (1992) also pointed out that information need results from the effort of making sense which thus results in bridging the gap in an individual's knowledge.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The term information needs, and information seeking behaviour has been a major issue of study in academic environment. The information needs of pregnant women are massive and the way they accomplish this is diverse. Thus, the desire to identify the information needs of pregnant women is essential, so are the diverse methods used in meeting such needs. Utilization of information obtained by the pregnant women depends largely on how and where they seek the information they need

It is against this backdrop that the researcher is undertaking this study on information needs and seeking behaviour of Pregnant Women in Ughelli General Hospital, Delta State with the appropriate intention to understand the problems they are faced, with the accurate recommendations to correct the anomalies discovered.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to determine the information needs and seeking behaviour of Pregnant Women in Ughelli General Hospital, Delta State. The specific objectives are to:

1. Identify the information needs of pregnant women in ughelli general hospital
2. Ascertain the information seeking behaviour of pregnant women in ughelli general hospital
3. Identify the information sources used by pregnant women in ughelli general hospital
4. Identify challenges pregnant women faced with when seeking for information

## **Research Question**

The following research question is to guide the study

1. What are the information needs of pregnant women in ughelli general hospital?
2. What is the information seeking behaviour of pregnant women in ughelli general hospital?
3. What are the information sources used by pregnant women in ughelli general hospital?
4. What are the challenges pregnant women are faced with when seeking for information

## **INFORMATION NEEDS OF PREGNANT WOMEN**

Several studies have been conducted on information needs by several scholars in the academic field. And the term implies, there is no single person on earth whether literate or illiterate that does not have need for information. Information need can therefore be referred to that particular issue or circumstances that information desired to solve. Pregnant women have information needs that cut across several issues in relation to their condition.

Pregnancy is not only a period of physical changes but also a period in a woman's life when health related behaviours are most vital as decisions taken in pregnancy could affect the life of a mother and her unborn fetus. For pregnant women to adequately live a healthy life and ensure the safe delivery of their babies, they need to search and acquire information necessary for healthy living.

The search for information, however, starts with the identification of a gap in knowledge, for which the individual makes an effort to bridge. As noted by Allen (1996) information need occurs whenever an individual's knowledge fails.

Dervin (1992) also points out that information need results from the effort of making sense which thus results in bridging of gap in an individual's knowledge. To this end therefore, Murugathas, Sritharan and Santharoban (2020) in a study they conducted the following were outlined as some but not limited to the information needs of pregnant women which are: Pregnancy complications, Delivery complications, Methods of child delivery, Special tests, Taking medicines, Vaccination, Symptoms of pregnancy, Nutrition, Development and growth of the fetus, Newborn care, Items to be taken to hospital for childbirth, Family planning, Sexual activity, Postpartum care (Care of mother), Breastfeeding, Carrying out daily activities, Physical and psychological changes after delivery, Exercise. In a similar vein Noncungu and Chipps (2020) in their study came up with some needs pregnant women grapple for during the time of pregnancy which are: How the baby grows and develops, What are the danger signs of pregnancy, Information about prenatal vitamins, Using illegal drugs, What I should or should not eat, Deal with stress during pregnancy, Physical abuse to women by partners, How to balance rest and activity, Emotional changes during pregnancy, Practice safe sex during pregnancy, Birth control methods to use, What are safe exercises for me, Prepare for breast feeding, Smoking and pregnancy, Alcohol use and pregnancy, Kinds of safe and unsafe medications, What to do if my labour starts early, HIV test and prevention, How much weight should I gain, Proper use seat belts during pregnancy. These and many more are the information needs of pregnant women

## **THE INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOUR OF PREGNANT WOMEN**

**Information Seeking Behaviour:** is a process that begins with the challenges and problems that compel and propel the information seeker to look for information regarding reproductive health among pregnant women. Pregnant women seek health information to make decisions during pregnancy; the most appropriate way of seeking information was using informal sources of

information from friends, oral talk, from health workers, and so on. Information seeking or needs of people determine the behaviour in which the information will be sought. Usually, pregnant women seek various information ranging from nutritional information, sexual and familial relationships, and pregnancy complications (Acharya, Bell, and Simkhada 2010). Slomian et al's (2017) reported from their study that women do not feel adequately informed during pregnancy and do not feel amply supported, especially from a psychological point of view. They stressed that less-educated women will certainly use less antenatal care. Ezeama and Ezeamah, (2015) reported from their study that in the third world countries, data confirmed that the number of ANC attendance had a positive effect on birth weight. Similarly, In Israel, more deaths arise amongst infants whom mothers had not received antenatal care. In Nigeria 46 of 49 maternal deaths, which happen amongst women during labour and delivery had not received antenatal care. Mullaay,(2013) opined that in Guatemala, that failure to attend formal ANC is considerably linked to both anti-natal and neonatal deaths. While, Mumba, (2015) opined that printed materials are the common sources of health information for pregnant women. Such as books and journals, leaflets, women's magazines, and newspapers.

### **INFORMATION SOURCES FOR PREGNANT WOMEN**

An open-ended question was posed to ask participants about the information resources they used prior to their clinic visit. Responses included books, pamphlets and the Internet. Although three participants primarily used the Internet as their information source, one reported that she mainly used the WebMD site, one used MSN to browse Internet information and another one had signed up with an electronic newsletter sent to her weekly. One participant reported that she only used the information from a book and the last participant indicated using the information pamphlets that she received from her doctor's office. In general, participants felt the information they found was very useful

## **CHALLENGES FACED WHEN PREGNANT WOMEN SEEK FOR INFORMATION**

Uloma and Adedotu (2013) opined that challenges hindering pregnant woman from accessing their information needs include their inability to access the libraries, lack of income and time. However, According to Glenton, (2002 ), use of medical terminology by the information sources, which are usually not understood by the information seeker is a major barrier to utilization of health information by a pregnant woman. Also Ajayi and Osaknle (2013) cited unprofessional practices, attitudes and behaviours of Health personnel as barriers to the use and access of health-related information by pregnant woman Mulauzi and Daka (2018) listed several challenges that women face in their bid to access the required information. These challenges include illiteracy, poverty, distance, language barrier, inadequate services, lack of information, inadequate human resources, poor attitudes of health workers towards women, and cultural practices.

## **METHODOLOGY**

A descriptive research method was adopted for this study. This method was used because it allows gathering of data from a sample of a given population to estimate the true value of the population. The target population of this study cut across all the pregnant women which were derived from the wards of the Ughelli General Hospital, Delta State which amounted to the total population of 31 respondents.

The sampling techniques used for this study is purposive or judgmental sampling techniques. In collecting data for this study, a structured questionnaire was used as the research instrument. The instrument was outlined in sections from A – F.

Out of the thirty-one (31) questionnaires administered by the researcher to the respondents, hundred percent were returned, interpreted, analyzed using frequency distribution tables and percentage to arrive at the findings of the study.



## RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Table 1: Demographic Information of Respondents

<b>Maternal Age</b>	
Less than 35 years	19(61%)
Above 35 years	12(39%)
<b>Marital Status</b>	
Married	18(58%)
Divorced/Separated	2(6%)
Living with baby's father/cohabiting	11(36%)
<b>Level of Education</b>	
Primary	5(16%)
Secondary	11(36%)
College of education	6(19%)
University	9(29%)
<b>Occupational Status</b>	
Unemployed	7(23%)
Self Employed	10(32%)
Employed	6(19%)
Student	8(26%)
<b>Number of pregnancies</b>	
First pregnancy	5(16%)
Second pregnancy	10(32%)
3-7 pregnancies	16(52%)

Source: Research Field Survey 2023

Table 1 above revealed the demographic information of the respondents from Ughelli general hospital, Delta State. The responses from the table shows that majority 19(61%) of the respondents maternal age is less than 35 years while 12(39%) of them are above 35 years. The marital status of the respondents shows that 18(58%) are married, 2(6%) are divorced or separated, 11(36%) are living with baby's father or cohabiting. Consequently, the table also shows the level of education of the respondents stating that 5(16%) had primary, 11(36%) secondary, 6(19%) college of education, 9(29%) university.

The table revealed also the occupational status of the respondents stating that 7(23%) are unemployed, 10(32%) are self-employed, 6(19%) employed and 8(26%) are students. Lastly, the table shows the number of pregnancies the respondents have had. 5(16%) indicated that it is their first pregnancy, 10(32%) their second pregnancy and 16(52%) 3-7 pregnancies.

**Table 2: Mean Score for Information Needs of Pregnant Women**

Please indicate your responses: Strongly Agree (SA) Agree (A) Undecided (U) Disagree (D) Strongly Disagree (SD) to the statement below by a tick in the space provided.

S/N	Information Needs of Pregnant Women	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean Score	Decision
1	Breast Feeding	14	10	6	-	1	4.16	Accept
2	Disease Prevention and Control Information	12	12	6	-	1	4.09	Accept
3	Environment Cleanliness	7	16	8	-	1	4.00	Accept
4	Information after delivery	10	9	9	3	-	3.83	Accept
5	Information on family planning	10	10	9	3	-	3.96	Accept
6	Information on how much work is to be done during pregnancy	8	8	11	3	1	3.61	Accept
7	Immunization	10	15	4	1	1	4.03	Accept
8	Physical and Psychological changes after delivery	3	8	15	2	3	3.19	Accept
9	Sexual activity during pregnancy	2	15	9	3	2	3.38	Accept
10	Items to be taken to hospital for child birth	3	11	11	5	1	3.32	Accept
11	What are the safe exercise during pregnancy	2	3	13	12	1	2.77	Accept
12	Symptoms of pregnancy	2	7	12	8	2	2.96	Accept
13	Kind of safe and unsafe medications	3	5	10	10	3	2.83	Accept
14	Methods of child delivery	1	4	14	7	5	2.64	Accept
15	Delivery complications	3	12	5	6	5	3.06	Accept
16	Pregnancy Complications	9	7	8	4	3	3.48	Accept
17	What I should or should not eat	4	4	14	5	4	2.96	Accept
18	Proper use of seat belt during pregnancy	4	-	5	10	12	2.48	Reject
19	What to do if my labour starts early	6	11	4	4	6	3.22	Accept
20	How the baby grows and develops	3	6	14	2	6	2.93	Accept
21	How much weight should I gain during pregnancy	3	6	7	10	5	2.74	Accept

Source: Research Field Survey 2023

The table above shows the mean scores for the areas where the respondents desire information in the Ughelli General Hospital Delta State. The mean score (4.16) revealed that the respondents are in dire need of information for breast feeding, followed by disease prevention and control (4.09), immunization (4.03), environmental cleanliness(4.00), information on family planning (3.96), information after delivery (3.83), information on how much work is be done during pregnancy (3.61), pregnancy complications (3.48), sexual activity during pregnancy (3.38), items to be taken to hospital during child birth (3.32), what to do if my labour starts early (3.22),

physical and psychological changes after delivery (3.19), delivery complications (3.06), symptoms of pregnancy and what I should or should not eat with mean score of (2.96) respectively, how the baby grows and develops (2.93), kind of safe and unsafe medications (2.83), what are the safe exercise during pregnancy (2.77), how much weight should I gain during pregnancy (2.74), methods of child delivery (2.64). However, proper use of seat belt with the mean score of (2.48) was rejected.

**Table 3: Mean Score for Information Sources Used by Pregnant Women**

Please indicate your responses: Strongly Agree (SA) Agree (A) Undecided (U) Disagree (D) Strongly Disagree (SD) to the statement below by a tick in the space provided.

S/N	Information Sources Used by Pregnant Women	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean Score	Decision
1	Book	7	2	8	6	8	3.12	Accept
2	Bulletins/Newsletter	5	2	7	6	11	2.48	Reject
3	Doctor	7	7	12	2	3	3.80	Accept
4	Film/Slide Projection	3	4	6	10	8	2.48	Reject
5	Family Members	3	3	9	15	2	2.77	Accept
6	Friends	2	5	7	15	2	2.67	Accept
7	Library	1	4	7	10	9	2.29	Reject
8	Internet	-	5	11	7	8	2.41	Reject
9	Other Pregnant Women	1	7	17	2	4	2.96	Accept
10	Nurses	2	17	5	4	3	3.35	Accept
11	Newspaper/ Magazine	5	4	3	7	12	2.29	Reject
12	Pre-Natal Health Education Classes	15	8	5	2	1	4.09	Accept
13	Pamphlets	3	4	3	4	17	2.09	Reject
14	Radio	3	5	6	5	12	2.41	Reject
15	Television	5	6	9	6	5	2.83	Accept

Source: Research Field Survey 2023

Table 3 above revealed the mean score for information sources used by the respondents in Ughelli General Hospital Delta State. The table shows the most accepted information source used by the respondents is pre-natal health education classes with the mean score of (4.09), followed by Doctor (3.80), Nurses (3.35), Books (3.12), other pregnant women (2.96), television (2.83), family members (2.77), friends (2.67). However, bulletin/newsletter (2.48), film/slide

projection (2.48), internet (2.41), radio (2.41), library (2.29), newspaper/magazines (2.29) and pamphlets (2.09) were rejected by the respondents.

**Table 4: Challenges Pregnant Women Face When Seeking for Information**

Please indicate your responses: Strongly Agree (SA) Agree (A) Undecided (U) Disagree (D) Strongly Disagree (SD) to the statement below by a tick in the space provided.

S/N	Challenges Pregnant Women Face when Seeking for Information	S	A	U	D	SD	Mean Score	Decision
1	Erratic power supply	6	4	8	8	5	2.93	Accept
2	feeling shy asking somebody for information	5	6	9	8	3	2.96	Accept
3	Lack of finance	7	7	11	3	3	3.38	Accept
4	I have childcare needs to take care of	7	11	6	6	1	3.54	Accept
5	I have family/household needs to take care of	5	12	4	6	4	3.25	Accept
6	I have no one to accompany me to the clinic	4	7	8	7	5	2.93	Accept
7	no one to confide on	1	10	7	9	4	2.83	Accept
8	Stress of waiting to see a doctor or healthcare professional	4	5	12	8	1	3.00	Accept
9	Ignorance	5	5	9	8	4	2.96	Accept
10	Inadequate functional public health centre	4	9	10	6	2	3.22	Accept
11	It is too far to get to the available health centre	1	8	13	6	3	2.93	Accept
12	The bad attitude of health staff towards pregnant women	3	2	11	15	-	2.77	Accept
13	High rate of Money consciousness by health professionals	3	4	8	12	4	2.67	Accept
14	Lack of time	1	3	8	8	11	2.19	Reject
15	Too much information stress me out	3	2	6	6	14	2.16	Reject
16	Do not know how to use the internet	2	7	3	10	11	2.51	Accept
17	No need for information I already know how to take care of myself	4	1	4	6	16	2.06	Reject

Source: Research Field Survey 2023

Table 4 shows the mean score of the challenges that hinders the respondents when seeking for information in Ughelli General Hospital Delta State. From the above table, the most challenging factor that hinders the respondents when seeking for information is: I have childcare needs to take care of (3.54), followed by lack of finance (3.38), I have family/household needs to take care of (3.25), inadequate functional public health centre (3.22), stress of waiting to see a doctor

or health care professional, feeling shy asking someone for information and ignorance (2.96) respectively. I have no one to accompany me to the clinic, erratic power supply and it is too far to get to the available health centre with the mean value (2.93) respectively, no one to confide on (2.83), the bad attitude of health staff towards pregnant women (2.77), high rate of money consciousness by health professionals (2.67) and do not know how to use the Internet (2.51). However, lack of time (2.19), too much information stress me out (2.16) and no need for information I already know how to take care of myself (2.06) were rejected by the respondents as challenging factors hindering the respondents when seeking for information.

## **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

### **Information Needs of Pregnant Women**

The findings of the study revealed the information needs of pregnant women in Ughelli General Hospital, Delta State. The responses of the respondents indicated that information on breast feeding is the most needed by pregnant women which is followed by disease prevention and control, immunization, environmental cleanliness, information on family planning, information after delivery, information on how much work is to be done during pregnancy, pregnancy complications, sexual activities, items to be taken to hospital during child birth, what to do if labour starts early, physical and psychological changes after delivery, delivery complications, symptoms of pregnancy, what to eat during pregnancy, the growth of the baby, safe and unsafe medications, the type of exercise to engage during pregnancy, how much weight I am expected to gain, the methods of child delivery all these are in correlation with study conducted by Murugathas, Sritharan and Santharooban (2020) and Noncungu and Chipps (2020). However it was revealed from the study that pregnant women do not desire or have need of information on the proper use of seat belt during pregnancy.

### **Information Sources Used by Pregnant Women**

The study revealed that the information sources that is used mostly by pregnant women in Ughelli general Hospital is the pre-natal health education classes, followed by doctors, Nurses, books, other pregnant women, television, family members and friends. On the contrary, the study revealed that bulletin/newsletter, film/slide projection, internet, radio, library, newspaper/magazines and pamphlets are not information sources for Ughelli General Hospital pregnant women as at when this study was conducted.

### **Challenges Pregnant Women Face when Seeking for Information**

The information gathered by the researcher from the respondents in Ughelli General Hospital revealed that I have child care need to take care of is the most challenging factor for the respondents that hinders pregnant women from seeking for information which is followed by lack of finance, family/household needs to take care of, inadequate functional public health centre, stress of waiting to see a doctor or health care professional, shyness and ignorance, absence of someone to accompany me to the clinic, erratic power supply, the distance to the health centre is too far, the attitude of health staff towards pregnant women, high rate of money consciousness by health professionals, inability to use the internet. However, it was revealed from the study that lack of time, too much information stress me out, no need for information I already know how to take care of myself were not considered by respondents as part of the challenges that deter pregnant women from seeking information in Ughelli General Hospital Delta State.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Pregnant women are very fragile and sensitive during the time of pregnancy.

Pregnant women have a lot of information needs which usually prompt their demand for information. When pregnant women are searching for information to meet their needs, they use different sources of information. Pregnancy in women is not only a time of physical changes but also a period in a woman's health related behaviours that are relevant, as decisions taken during this period could affect the life of a mother and her unborn fetus. For pregnant women to adequately live a healthy life and ensure their safety and safe delivery of their babies, they need to search and acquire information necessary for healthy living. To this end therefore, the following recommendations are seriously needed as far as this study is concern:

1. Since the information needs from this study has been identified, it is expedient that serious work by health practitioners should be done to ensure that these needs are adequately attended to so as to satisfy the yearning of pregnant women generally.
2. The pregnant women should be exposed especially the literate ones to the use of Internet, library, radio as sources of accessing information that will better their lives during the pregnancy period.
3. There should be adequate functional health centre, doctors should also make it easy for the pregnant women at this period of their pregnancy to easily access them without much constraint and the idea of tasking pregnant women aside the main charges that is required of them to pay should be discouraged and abolished by the health practitioners

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