

Minor ailments in pregnancy are not a minor concern for pregnant women: a morbidity assessment survey in rural Sri Lanka.

[Agampodi SB](#), [Wickramasinghe ND](#), [Horton J](#), [Agampodi TC](#).

Author information

Abstract

BACKGROUND:

Although maternal mortality has become a major focus on global public health agenda, maternal morbidity is a neglected area of research. The purpose of this paper is to present the burden of acute maternal illness during pregnancy.

METHODS:

A cross sectional study was carried out in Anuradhapura district, Sri Lanka. Pregnant women residing in the Anuradhapura district with a gestational age more than 24 weeks through 36 weeks were recruited to the study using a two-stage cluster sampling technique. All pregnant women who consented participated in a detailed interview using a structured questionnaire. Self reported episodes of acute illness during pregnancy were the main outcome measures. Secondary outcomes were utilization of medical services and frequency of hospitalizations.

RESULTS:

Nausea and vomiting during pregnancy (NVP) was experienced by 325 (69.7%) of the 466 pregnant women studied. Other common symptoms were backache (152, 32.6%), dizziness (112, 24.0%) and heartburn/regurgitation (107, 23.0%). Of the 421 pregnant women who reported ill health conditions 260 (61.8%) women sought medical treatment for these illnesses. Total number of episodes that needed treatment seeking were 373. Hospitalizations were reported by 83 (17.8%) pregnant women and the total number of hospitalizations was 109. The leading cause of hospitalization was NVP which accounted for 43.1% of total admissions and 49.1% of total days spent in hospitals.

CONCLUSIONS:

Minor maternal ill health conditions affecting day-to-day life have a major burden on pregnancy period. Evidence based management guidelines and health promotion strategies are needed to control and prevent these conditions, in order to provide comprehensive, good quality maternal health care.