

Traditional Practices among Rural Women to Relieve Their Common Pregnancy Minor Discomforts: A Descriptive Study

Background: Pregnancy is a normal process that results in a series of both physiological and psychological changes in women that require adjustment and adaptation on the part of the mother. The observable result of physiological changes is minor discomforts. The most common discomforts are morning sickness, heartburn, constipation, backache, and leg cramps. Although minor discomforts are non-serious, their presences detract from the mother feeling of comfort and well-being in many instances they can be avoid by preventive measures or healthful practices once they do occur. **Aim:** This study was done to assess the practices adopted by rural pregnant women to relive their common minor discomforts. **Subject & Methods:** The study was conducted at six maternal and child health centers in El-Mahalla Elkobra. A sample of 300 pregnant women was selected. Data were collected by an interview questionnaire. **Results:** the mean age of mothers was 27.44 ± 5.36 , 61.0% of them had 3 pregnancies or more, 76.7% used antenatal care services during their previous pregnancies, and 74.4% of the study subjects had irregular follow-up visits. The majority of them used harmful measures to overcome their minor discomfort than useful ones. Women's mothers were the main sources of women's information about practices to overcome common minor discomforts. Significant statistical relationships were observed between traditional practices to overcome common minor discomforts and some times of women's characteristics as educational level, occupational status, age at marriage, family income and utilization of antenatal care services by the studied subjects. **Conclusion:** Most of the rural dwellers used traditional measures to relieve associated pregnancy minor discomforts. Traditional practices among pregnant women to relieve common minor discomfort during pregnancy in the rural area tended to be more harmful than useful ones. Usage of traditional practiced affected by women's education, occupation, age at marriage, family income, and regular utilization of ANC services. **Recommendations:** Continuous education and training programs about pregnancy and its accompanied minor discomforts should be conducted for physicians, nurses, midwives, and TBAs to manage minor discomforts. Measures to combat women's delay in initiation antenatal care services should be taken.

Keywords: traditional practices, rural women, minor discomforts, useful practices, harmful practices