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Prenatal Health Condition of Women of Reproductive Age Group of Kersa Woreda

This policy brief examines prenatal health condition of women of reproductive age group of kersa woreda.

Introduction

The health condition of Ethiopian women is in jeopardy due to several reasons arising from underdevelopment.

Early marriage /child marriage is the most prevalent situation in developing countries. These girls who are married at age 14 and younger are five times more likely to die in pregnancy or child birth than women ages 20 to 24. They are also more likely to develop gestation induced hypertensive disorders and fistula. (ICRW. Sept. 2004).

Hypertensive and hemorrhage disorders are the leading causes of maternal mortality. The hypertensive disorder in particular, it is known to have strong relationship with teenage pregnancies.

Prenatal care is important for preventing, identifying, and treating conditions which affect the health of an expectant mother and her baby.

Age at first pregnancy

Three hundred five women of reproductive age group in Kersa were asked a question related to their age at which the first conception occurred, 210 (70%) of them they were conceived first at an age of below 18 years. See fig.

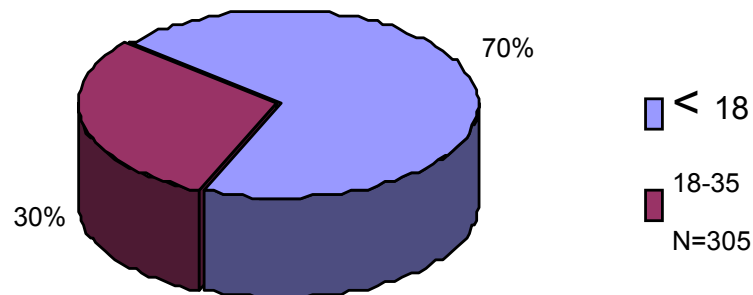


Fig. 1 Age at first pregnancy

Health problems encountered during pregnancy

Eleven mothers experienced health problems related to pregnancy: headache, vaginal bleeding and fever were reported by 45.5%, 45.5 and 36 % respectively. There were also reports of pedal edema and convulsion (9% each). See table 1.

Table: Health problems encountered during pregnancy

S.no	Health problems encountered during pregnancy	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	
1	Severe headache	Yes	5	45.5
		No	6	54.5
2	Pedal edema	Yes	1	9
		No	10	91
3	Convulsion	Yes	1	9
		No	10	91
4	Vaginal bleeding	Yes	5	45.5
		No	6	54.5
5	Fever	Yes	4	36.6
		No	7	65.4
6	Fatigue/generalized body weakness	Yes	5	45
		No	6	55
7	Lower abdominal pain With foul smelling vaginal discharge	Yes	0	0
		No	11	100
8	Rapture of amniotic fluid	Yes	0	0
		No	10	100

Recommendation

Girls who are married at early age may face higher maternal morbidity and mortality than the older. In kersa most of the mothers (70%) are married at early age (below 18 years). There are situations in their report which could reflect their prenatal morbidity related to early marriage. It is recommended that there should be a sustainable effort on creation of awareness on avoidance of early marriage.

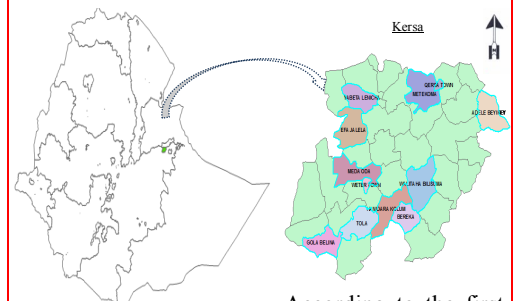
Kersa Demographic Surveillance and Health

Research Center (KDS-HRC),

Haramaya University:

The surveillance site was established in September 2007 in Kersa district, Eastern Hararge of Oromia region, East Ethiopia with aim of tracking demographic changes like death, birth, migration and marital status change. The surveillance activities further extended by adding surveys in Nutrition, Reproductive Health, Environmental Health, HIV/AIDS, Morbidity/health seeking behavior and health care utilization during the month of January-March 2008.

The surveillance activity is instituted in 12 kebeles (the smallest administrative unit in Ethiopia with approximate population Size of 4-5 thousand). Two of the kebeles are semi urban and the remaining 10 are rural kebeles.



According to the first census there were 10,256 households and 53,482 people in the study site with an average household size of 5.2 and sex ratio of 104.5. In the study area the crude birth and death rates were 26.8 and 9.2 per 1000 population. Infant and under five mortality rates were 44.9 and 108.2 per 1000 live births respectively.

The activities of the surveillance are lead by a coordinator and a group of six staff members from the College of Health and Medical Sciences.

