

Socio-demographic and work-related conditions of field public health midwives in Jaffna district and their association with postnatal domiciliary visits

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Background: Midwifery includes care of women during pregnancy, labour, and the postpartum period, as well as care of the newborn. The field public health midwife (PHM) is the closest health care provider that the community confronts in Sri Lanka. Any woman who needs the service of a field PHM can reach her. Post-natal domiciliary visits (PNDV) are a critical element of midwifery because they enable early identification of danger signs in the mother and the new born. This study aimed to describe socio-demographic and work-related conditions of field PHMs and their association with the percentage of PNDV carried out by field PHMs in the Jaffna District.

Methodology: A descriptive cross-sectional study was carried out among all field PHMs in the Jaffna District. Details relevant to socio-demographic and work-related conditions were collected using a pre-tested self-administered questionnaire. A data extraction form was used to collect data relevant to PNDV in 2017 from the Monthly Statement Report (MSR). Data were analyzed by using SPSS (v.23). Proportions and percentages were used to describe the data and the t-test was used to assess the association between socio-demographic and work-related conditions and PNDV.

Results: Hundred and fifty field PHMs participated in the study giving a response rate of 96.7%. The average PNDV percentage within the first 5 days of delivery was 81.81%, within 10 days was 75.30%, within 21 days was 76.33%, and within 42 days was 82.28%. PNDV within the first 5 days was significantly associated with spousal working hours ($p \leq 0.011$) and planning of field work ($p \leq 0.005$). PNDV within the first 10 days was significantly associated with distance from the PHM's residence to the work area/s ($p \leq 0.005$).

Conclusion: Spousal working hours, planning of field work and distance from the PHM's residence were associated with PNDV, suggesting that time may be a critical factor. While developing time management skills of field PHMs may help to improve the quality of post-natal care, these findings may also relate to the vacant field PHM cadre positions in the Jaffna District.

Key words: Public health midwives, post-natal domiciliary visits, work-related factors