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Maternal health challenges and prospects for national development: a case-study of Badagry local government, Lagos State

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Abstract

This study seeks to explore maternal health as a critical aspect of national development. It has long

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been recognized that the health status of pregnant women is an important indicator of the general state of health of any population. The health of pregnant women also influences the health of their babies. Hence, fetal and infant health is one of the main determinants of health in childhood and adulthood. Countries are ranked by various health and economic indicators to show how they fare compared to others. The decrease in life expectancy is in large part reflective of the increased maternal and infant mortality. The continuous increase in maternal mortality in Nigeria has stimulated a re-examination of the issue in order to identify subtle, yet profound variables that may be responsible for this perennial problem, in order to attain development in health. To this end, the overall aim of the study was to investigate challenges to maternal health during pregnancy as a barrier to national development. Data was generated by questionnaire and in-depth interview and analysis were made by simple percentage and content analysis respectively. The findings were discussed within the Health Belief Model and concluded by highlighting the importance of socio-economic factors in the reduction of maternal mortality in the study area. The study however, revealed that some socioeconomic variables are detrimental to the health of women and their safety during pregnancy. The consequences of these are described in the paper and recommendations made.

Key Words: maternal health, national development, socio-economic variables, pregnant women.

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