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PREVALENCE OF UNPLANNED PREGNANCIES AND ITS ASSOCIATED FACTORS AMONG WOMEN ATTENDING ANTENATAL CLINICS IN PANADURA MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH AREA

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Background: An unplanned pregnancy occurs when conception happens without the explicit desire of one or both individuals involved, causing emotional stress, relationship strain, and potential difficulties in parenting. Unplanned pregnancies may result in postponed antenatal care and adverse outcomes for both the mother and the newborn. This study aimed at assessing the prevalence of unplanned pregnancies and its associated factors among women attending antenatal clinics in Panadura MOH area.

Methods: A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted among 301 pregnant women attending antenatal clinics in the Panadura MOH area. Eight clinics were selected randomly from 17 available, namely Keselwaththa, Adamforest, Thotawaththa, Ambalamduwa, Riwdewgama, Walana, Hirana, and the Central Clinic Panadura. Data were gathered through an interviewer-administered questionnaire. Associations with unplanned pregnancy were assessed with the Chi-square test at $p < 0.05$ significance level.

Results: The response rate was 100%. The prevalence of unplanned pregnancy was 25.6%. The mean age of sample was 27 years ($SD=4.071$). It was significantly associated with household income ($p=0.026$); sexual behavior ($p=0.012$); use of family planning (FP) ($p=0.015$); recent FP method used ($p=0.022$); method of receiving advice on FP ($p=0.006$); periconceptional folic acid usage ($p=0.041$); and personal believes on using FP methods ($p=0.022$), on discontinuing a method ($p < 0.01$) and never using a FP method ($p < 0.01$).

Conclusion: Unplanned pregnancy is prevalent in Panadura MOH area and it is associated with household income, sexual behavior, recent contraceptive method use, advisory sources, folic acid intake, personal beliefs, method discontinuation, and non-adherence. Focused programmes on FP conducted at community setting are recommended.

Keywords: Unplanned pregnancy, Panadura MOH, Associated factors, Family planning, antenatal clinics