

**HEALTH NEEDS AND HEALTH PROBLMS OF PRENATAL WOMEN IN  
OVIA NORTH EAST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, EDO STATE**

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**MAY, 2024**

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,  
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## CERTIFICATION

The undersign certified that this project work was carried out by **Chioma Stephanie CHIKAEZE** with matriculation number EDU2005988 for a partial fulfilment of the requirement of the award of Bachelor of science (BSc Ed) Health Education University of Benin.

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## **DEDICATION**

This research work is dedicated to GOD ALMIGHTY. For his unfailing love towards the researcher and for enabling her to complete her bachelor's degree program.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

The successful completion of this research project goes to numerous persons whom the researcher owes profound gratitude.

Most importantly, I am very grateful to God Almighty for his unfailing love towards me and for enabling me to complete my bachelor's degree programme.

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## ABSTRACT

*This study was designed to investigate the health needs and health problems of prenatal women in Ovia Northeast Local Government Area of Edo State, Nigeria. Four (4) research questions were raised to guide the study. The descriptive cross-sectional survey design was adopted, and the multistage sampling technique was used to select 60 respondents for this study. The instrument used for data collection was the researcher-designed questionnaire and was validated by the researcher's project supervisor. The reliability of the instrument was established using the test re-test method of estimating reliability. After computation, the reliability yielded a Coefficient of 0.724. The questionnaire was distributed directly to the respondents by the researcher. After the collection and collation of the instrument, the data obtained were subjected to analysis using descriptive statistics of frequency counts, and percentage.*

*Results from the study revealed significant gaps in health education, nutritional access, and reliable transportation for prenatal care. Notably, 73% of respondents indicated a need for prenatal health education and counseling, while 42% faced transportation issues affecting healthcare access. Health problems such as gestational diabetes, hypertension, and dietary restrictions were common, with 28.4% of women experiencing specific health conditions.*

*The findings underscore the necessity for improved healthcare services, better transportation options, increased public awareness, financial support, and enhanced nutritional programs. The study concludes that addressing these areas can significantly improve maternal and fetal health outcomes. Recommendations include government and policy interventions, community-based approaches, and educational campaigns to mitigate health problems and promote the well-being of prenatal women in Ovia North-East LGA.*

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **Background to the study**

Maternal and child health remain significant public health challenges globally, particularly in developing countries like Nigeria. During pregnancy, because of the extra demand made by the fetus on the mother and due to hormonal influences, the mother is posed with many needs and problems. These needs and problems could be physical, emotional, social, or economic in nature.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), health needs refer to the "requirements for health care and services" necessary to maintain or improve the health status of individuals or populations. These needs encompass a broad range of factors, including preventive, promotive, curative, and rehabilitative services, as well as the underlying social, economic, and environmental determinants of health. WHO emphasizes the importance of addressing health needs comprehensively and equitably to achieve the highest possible level of health for all people.

Imperative that all pregnant women should attend regular prenatal care, for proper assessment, early detection, and prompt management of risk factors. It will also be a medium whereby the health care providers can help the mothers to identify their needs

in pregnancy and be able to meet their needs accordingly thus reducing the risks involved during pregnancy and delivery. The aims of these needs care are to optimize maternal and fetal health, to improve women's experience of pregnancy and birth, and to prepare women for motherhood Sultan M Mosleh Women and Birth ( 2017 ) Activities involved during the prenatal care period include physical examination of the pregnant women, data collection and analysis, laboratory investigations and examinations; blood grouping, genotype, hemoglobin estimation, urine testing, weight and height estimation history taking, blood pressure estimation and height education. All these serve as monitor for proper assessment of maternal and fetal well-being (Angular, 2003).

The term health problem can be seen as a disease or medical ailment or an environmental condition that poses the risk of diseases or medical ailment. Some view it as a state in which an individual is unable to function normally and without pain. Health problems alter the normal body function of an individual. It could be in form of physical, mental, social, and emotional disfunction. The term includes diseases, ailments, or risks of disease or ailment caused by or related to environmental factors, control of animals and rabies, control of insect and rodent vectors, disposal of solid and hazardous waste, and control and monitoring of air quality.

Most health problems faced by pregnant women are because of inadequate maternal information needed to enhance a healthy pregnant life. Some are because of

complications during the pregnancy (pre-natal) and after the pregnancy (post- natal). Some of these complications include High blood pressure, Bleeding, Preterm labor, Depression and anxiety, Pregnancy loss or miscarriage, Infections, Gestational diabetes, Back pain, and Pelvic pain. In Ovia Northeast Local Government Area of Edo State, Nigeria, understanding the specific health needs and problems of pregnant women is crucial for designing effective interventions to improve maternal and child health outcomes.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Despite progress in global maternal and child health indicators, Nigeria continues to experience high maternal and child mortality rates. Ovia Northeast Local Government Area, like many other parts of the country, grapples with various health challenges that affect prenatal women. This is largely due to several unmet health needs for pregnant women including proper understanding of pregnancy stages, lack of access to antenatal services, inadequate maternal information needed to enhance a healthy pregnant life, financial problems, infant practices, nutrition, labor, birth, and postnatal care (Owusu-Addo and Morhe, 2016), Identifying these challenges is imperative for developing targeted interventions to address them effectively.

## **Research Question**

The following research questions are raised to guide the study:

1. What are the health needs of pregnant women in Ovia North-East Local Government Area of Edo state.
2. What are the health problems encountered by pregnant women in Ovia North-East Local Government Area of Edo state.
3. How can the problems encountered by pregnant women in Ovia North-East Local Government Area of Edo state be resolved.
4. What are the benefits of proper health needs during the period of gestation.

## **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this research is to identify and analyze the health needs and problems of pregnant women in Ovia Northeast Local Government Area of Edo State, Nigeria.

Specific objectives include:

1. To examine the health needs required for pregnant women.
2. To examine the health problems faced by pregnant women and its impact.
3. To determine ways in which these health problems can be solved.
4. To examine the benefits of health needs required during the stages of pregnancy.

## **Significance of the Study**

This research is significant for several reasons:

- It will contribute to a better understanding of the health needs and problems faced by pregnant women in Ovia Northeast Local Government Area, thereby informing the development of targeted interventions.
- Findings from this study will guide policymakers, healthcare providers, and other stakeholders in designing and implementing maternal and child health programs that are contextually relevant and effective.

## **Scope and Delimitation of the Study**

This research focuses specifically on the health needs and problems of pregnant women in Ovia Northeast Local Government Area of Edo State, Nigeria.

While this research aims to provide insights into the health needs and problems of pregnant women in Ovia Northeast Local Government Area of Edo State, Nigeria, certain delimitations are necessary to maintain the focus and feasibility of the study.

These delimitations include:

- i. Time Frame:** The study is conducted within a specific time frame and may not capture long-term trends or changes in maternal and child health indicators over time.

- ii. **Sample Size:** Due to resource constraints and practical limitations, the study may have a limited sample size, which could impact the generalizability of findings. However, efforts will be made to ensure the representativeness and diversity of participants within the available sample.
- iii. **Availability of Data:** The study relies on existing data sources, such as health records and surveys, which may be limited or incomplete. Data availability constraints may restrict the depth of analysis in certain areas.

### **Definition of Terms**

**Health needs:** Specific requirements or necessities for maintaining or improving an individual's physical, mental, and social well-being.

**Health problems:** Conditions or issues that adversely affect an individual's physical, mental, or social well-being.

**Health:** This is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

**Antenatal care:** Often abbreviated as ANC, refers to the healthcare services provided to pregnant women before childbirth.

**Pre-natal women:** Women who are currently pregnant or in the period leading up to childbirth.

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Literature review is hereby presented under the following sub-headings:

- Conceptual Framework
  - Health Needs of Pregnant Women
  - Health Problems of Pregnant Women
  - Benefits of Improved Health Needs During Pregnancy
  - Ways to Eradicate Health Problems Encountered by Pregnant Women
  - Summary of Reviewed Literature
- 
- **Conceptual Framework**

The period of gestation is a pivotal phase in the lifecycle of women, marking a time of significant physiological and psychological changes. This stage necessitates a comprehensive approach to healthcare to ensure the well-being of both the mother and the developing fetus. The importance of understanding and addressing the health needs and problems of pregnant women cannot be overstated, given the profound impact these factors have on maternal and neonatal outcomes (World Health Organization, 2000). In Ovia-North East LGA of Edo State, like in many parts of the world, pregnant women encounter various challenges that affect their health and that of their unborn children.

These challenges are multifaceted, including but not limited to, access to quality healthcare, nutritional needs, psychological support, and the prevalence of specific health conditions (Azubike, 2016).

Maternal health needs refer to the specific requirements essential for maintaining the physical, emotional, and social well-being of pregnant women throughout the gestational period. Recognizing and addressing these needs are crucial for ensuring optimal maternal health outcomes (Etiebet, 2008).

Maternal health problems encompass a range of medical conditions, complications, and challenges that pregnant women may encounter during pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period. These problems can arise due to biological factors, socio-economic disparities, cultural practices, and environmental conditions. Common health problems include gestational diabetes, hypertension, anemia, obstetric complications, and mental health disorders. Understanding the nature, prevalence, and impact of these problems is essential for developing effective interventions and strategies to mitigate their adverse effects on maternal and neonatal health (Etiebet, 2008).

### **Health Needs of Pregnant Women**

Pregnancy is an important transitional period in a woman's life, and appropriate antenatal care, information and advice are one of the important ways of meeting up to the needs of the expectant mother. During pregnancy, women have unique health needs

that must be addressed to ensure the well-being of both the mother and the developing fetus. The health needs of a pregnant woman are crucial for both maternal and fetal well-being. WHO 2001, suggest that adequate prenatal care, a balanced diet rich in nutrients, regular exercise, and sufficient rest are essential. Monitoring for complications, managing stress, and staying hydrated are also important aspects of ensuring a healthy pregnancy. Consultation with healthcare professionals and adherence to their advice play a vital role in supporting the overall health of a pregnant woman. The health needs of a pregnant woman encompass a comprehensive range of factors that aim to ensure the well-being of both the mother and the developing fetus. These needs are crucial for a healthy pregnancy and successful childbirth. According to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologist (ACOG, 2012), Regular prenatal check-ups with healthcare professionals are vital to monitor the progress of pregnancy, identify potential complications, and provide necessary interventions. Early and consistent prenatal care significantly contributes to positive outcomes. Emotional support and education on childbirth and postpartum care are also integral components of meeting the health needs of a prenatal woman. Another important way of meeting up to the needs of a prenatal woman is through health care. Health care during pregnancy is called prenatal care (Oxford dictionary). Getting prenatal care can help a mother have a healthier baby. It also lowers the risk of the baby being born too early, which can lead to health problems for the baby. During prenatal care, the doctor or midwife can find any health problems that may come up during the stages of pregnancy.

## **Nutritional Need**

Meeting the nutritional needs of a pregnant woman is crucial for the health and development of both the mother and the growing fetus. A well-balanced diet during pregnancy provides essential nutrients that support the various physiological changes and increased demands on the body. According to the world health organization (WHO, 1994), a well-balanced diet is essential, ensuring adequate intake of nutrients like folic acid, iron, calcium, vitamins, etc. Proper nutrition supports the growth and development of the fetus and helps prevent complications such as neural tube defects and anemia (Peterson, 2013). It's always important to eat a balanced diet — and it's even more important when you're pregnant because what you eat is the main source of nutrients for your baby. A healthy and varied diet is important at all times in life, but particularly so during pregnancy. The maternal diet must provide sufficient energy and nutrients to meet the mother's usual requirements, as well as the needs of the growing fetus, and enable the mother to lay down stores of nutrients required for fetal development as well as for lactation. The dietary recommendations for pregnant women are actually very similar to those for other adults, but with a few notable exceptions. The main recommendation is to follow a healthy, balanced diet based on the Balance of Good Health model. In particular, pregnant women should try to consume plenty of iron, and folate rich foods, and a daily supplement of vitamin D (10µg/day) is recommended throughout pregnancy (Andrews, 1999, Food and Nutrition Board, Institute of Medicine, 2001).

American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG, 2012), suggest that pregnant women need these key nutrients for a healthy pregnancy:

- Calcium

Helps to build strong bones and teeth. Main sources include milk, cheese, yogurt, and sardines. During pregnancy you need 1,000 milligrams (mg) daily.

- Iron

Helps red blood cells deliver oxygen to your baby. Sources include lean red meat, dried beans, peas, and iron-fortified cereals. During pregnancy you need 27 mg daily. Iron, which is essential for many metabolic processes, including oxygen transport and regulation of cell growth and differentiation.

- Vitamin A

You need this vitamin for healthy skin, eyesight, and bone growth. Carrots, dark, leafy greens, and sweet potatoes are good sources. During pregnancy you need 770 micrograms daily.

- Vitamin C

Promotes healthy gums, teeth, and bones, and helps your body absorb iron. Good sources include citrus fruit, broccoli, tomatoes, and strawberries. During pregnancy you need 85 mg daily.

- Vitamin D

Aids your body in the absorption of calcium to help build your baby's bones and teeth. Sources include exposure to sunlight, fortified milk, and fatty fish, such as salmon. During pregnancy you need 600 international units (IUs) daily. Vitamin D is essential for the improvement of immune function and promotes calcium homeostasis and bone health (Aranow, 2011, Feldman et al., 2011);

- Vitamin B6

Helps form red blood cells and helps your body use protein, fat, and carbohydrates. You can find vitamin B6 in beef, liver, pork, whole-grain cereals, and bananas. During pregnancy you need 1.9 mg daily.

- Vitamin B12

Helps form red blood cells and maintains your nervous system. You can find this vitamin only in animal products. Good sources include liver, meat, fish, poultry, and milk. During pregnancy you need 2.6 micrograms daily.

- Folate (Folic Acid)

Helps in the production of blood and protein, it also reduces the risk of neural tube defects (a birth defect of the brain and spinal cord). You can find folate in green, leafy vegetables, liver, orange juice, legumes (beans, peas, lentils), and nuts. 400 micrograms

of folate daily before pregnancy and during the first 12 weeks of pregnancy to reduce the risk of neural tube defects. During pregnancy, doctors recommend you get 600 micrograms daily.

- Prenatal Vitamins

Vitamin and mineral supplements cannot replace a healthy diet. Most doctors recommend that pregnant women take a prenatal vitamin and mineral supplement every day in addition to eating a healthy diet. Taking a supplement ensures that you and your baby get enough important nutrients like folic acid and iron. But don't overdo it — taking too much can be harmful for you and your baby.

In the context of Ovia-North East LGA of Edo State, Nigeria, ensuring access to nutritious food can be challenging due to various factors such as socio-economic disparities, geographic barriers, and limited healthcare infrastructure. Women living in rural areas or with limited financial resources may face difficulties accessing nutritious food and prenatal vitamins, leading to nutritional deficiencies that can negatively impact maternal and fetal health (Ogundahun, 2014)

Addressing the nutritional needs of pregnant women require a multi-faceted approach involving collaboration between government agencies, healthcare providers, community organizations, and other stakeholders. Strategies may include:

- Implementing nutritional supplementation programs to provide pregnant women with essential vitamins and minerals.
- Providing education and support to pregnant women on the importance of proper nutrition, prenatal care, and healthy lifestyle behaviors.

### **Psychological and Social Support Need**

In addition to physical health needs, pregnant women also have psychological and social support needs that play a significant role in their overall well-being and pregnancy outcomes. Pregnancy can be a time of heightened emotional vulnerability, as women may experience anxiety, stress, depression, and other mental health challenges related to pregnancy, childbirth, and parenting (Adebisi 2008). Additionally, social support systems, including family, friends, healthcare providers, and community resources, play a crucial role in providing emotional support, practical assistance, and access to resources needed to navigate the challenges of pregnancy and motherhood (Adebisi, 2009).

In Ovia-North East LGA, pregnant women may face unique psychological and social support needs influenced by cultural norms, socio-economic factors, and access to mental health services. Stigma surrounding mental health, limited awareness of available support services, and cultural beliefs about pregnancy and childbirth may contribute to barriers in seeking and receiving appropriate psychological support (Omigbodun, 2012). Furthermore, social determinants such as poverty, unemployment,

and interpersonal violence may exacerbate stress and mental health issues among pregnant women, underscoring the importance of addressing broader social and economic inequalities to support maternal well-being.

To address the psychological and social support needs of pregnant women in Ovia-North East LGA, it is essential to adopt a holistic approach that recognizes the interconnectedness of physical, emotional, and social factors influencing maternal health. Strategies may include:

- iv. Providing culturally sensitive mental health services, including counseling, support groups, and psychoeducation, to address psychological challenges during pregnancy and postpartum.
- v. Integrating mental health screening and assessment into routine prenatal care visits to identify women at risk of mental health disorders and provide timely interventions.
- vi. Strengthening social support networks through community-based programs, peer support groups, and outreach initiatives to reduce social isolation and promote connectedness among pregnant women.
- vii. Addressing social determinants of health, such as poverty, unemployment, and gender-based violence, through targeted interventions aimed at improving socio-economic conditions and empowering women to access resources and support services.

## **Prenatal Care Need**

According to World Health Organization, (WHO) (1996), Prenatal or Antenatal care (ANC) is the care provided by skilled health-care professionals to pregnant women and adolescent girls in order to ensure the best health conditions for both mother and baby during pregnancy. It includes risk identification and screening, prevention and management of pregnancy-related or concurrent diseases, and health education and promotion. The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends that ANC should be initiated within the first trimester of gestation with at least four, and optimally eight visits during the pregnancy. Specifically, the WHO advises pregnant women to initiate contact during the first 12 weeks' gestation, with subsequent contacts taking place at 20, 26, 30, 34-, 36-, 38-, and 40-weeks' gestation. Appropriate prenatal screening and counseling are of utmost importance for pregnant women. Previous research examining the relationship between ANC and birth expectations found that negative expectations can lead to fear and this might result in tension and pain during labor. Antenatal care can enable women to develop the coping skills to replace negative attitudes with positive expectations toward labor and childbirth.

Antenatal care (ANC) is very important to pregnant women as it helps prevent mother and child mortality, prevent complications help foster a good relationship between the husband and wife, mother and child and father and child. 84.7% of pregnant women have at least one ANC contact with skilled personnel. ANC can help women prepared

for delivery and understand warning signs during pregnancy and childbirth. It can be a source for micronutrient supplementation, treatment for pregnancy induced hypertension to prevent pre-eclampsia and eclampsia. ANC act as a route to provide immunization against tetanus, HIV testing and medication to prevent Mother To- Child Transmission (PMTCT) in case of HIV positive pregnant women. In cases malaria is endemic, health personnel can also provide pregnant women with medication and insecticide treated mosquito net to help prevent this debilitating sometimes deadly disease. During ANC visit, pregnant women are educated on the following important topics: nutrition, medication, lifestyle, exercise, personal and environmental hygiene, safety in the environment, etc.

It is recognized that early and regular antenatal care attendance is strongly associated to better maternal and neonatal outcomes because pregnant women who do so fully benefit from its preventive and curative services. To reduce maternal and neonatal morbidity and mortality, the World Health Organization (WHO) recommended that pregnant women should receive ANC services at least 4 times starting from the first trimester of pregnancy. These provided services are used for prevention, early diagnosis, and treatment of pregnancy-related problems.

### **Maternal Health Information Need**

Pregnancy and child birth is a major developmental period in women's life. Access to useful and relevant information in this period is crucial for expectant mothers (Deave,

2008). Pregnant women seek information during pregnancy to prepare themselves for their maternal responsibilities. As a result, they are exposed to a wide range of information sources and opportunities for antenatal education, including informal education carried out by family and friends, formal education within the context of antenatal care, discussion with health care professionals and midwives, and review of printed materials (Grimes, Forster, & Newton, 2014).

Maternal health information is a fundamental building block of women's health during pregnancy, childbirth and the postpartum period. It is noted that women require maternal health information at three stages: during pregnancy, childbirth and postpartum (Johnson, & Ingram, 2013). During pregnancy, women need information on importance of regular checkups, place of delivery, birth preparedness, pregnancy period, nutrition, miscarriage, pregnancy complications or danger signs, sexual and family relations, fetus development, expected child, TB, HIV and malaria in pregnancy, medicines in pregnancy, family planning, and exercise. During childbirth, women, according to the findings require information on infant care, child immunization, infant feeding, maternal recovery, hygiene, premature birth, low birth weight, infections, umbilical cord care and diarrhea. Information on self-care (hygiene, nutrition, weight loss); sexual relationship; daily care of infant, house and family; emotional support, physical rest and sleep is important during postpartum period. Some challenges that prevent women from receiving or seeking maternal information include illiteracy, poverty, distance, language barrier, inadequate services, lack of information, inadequate

human resources, poor attitudes of health workers towards women and cultural practices. Johnson, & Ingram, (2013), concluded that maternal health information has significant influence on the health of the mother and the newborn child. Therefore, health practitioners should intensify efforts to meet the maternal information needs of women.

### **Health Problems of Pregnant Women**

Pregnancy is a transformative journey, but it also brings with it a myriad of health challenges that can significantly impact the well-being of both the mother and the developing fetus. Chescheir (2009) opined that Health problems during pregnancy encompass a spectrum of conditions that can impact the well-being of both the pregnant woman and the developing fetus. Understanding these issues is crucial for timely intervention and effective management. Addressing these health problems involves regular prenatal care, open communication with healthcare providers, and prompt intervention when issues arise. Every pregnancy is unique, and individualized care is essential to navigate and manage potential health challenges effectively.

According to WHO (2013), among the most prevalent health problems are gestational diabetes, hypertension, anemia, back pain, and pelvic pain.

- Gestational diabetes

Characterized by elevated blood sugar levels during pregnancy, poses risks such as macrosomia (large birth weight), preterm birth, and increased likelihood of cesarean delivery.

- Hypertension

Including gestational hypertension and preeclampsia, can lead to severe complications such as eclampsia, placental abruption, and fetal growth restriction, posing significant threats to maternal and fetal health.

- Anemia

A condition characterized by low levels of red blood cells or hemoglobin, increases the risk of preterm birth, low birth weight, and maternal mortality.

- Back pain

During pregnancy, the ligaments in the body naturally become softer and stretch to prepare the woman for labor. This can put a strain on the joints of her lower back and pelvis, which can cause back pain. The additional weight and changes in posture can contribute to back pain. In fact, it's estimated that more than half of all the women experience some degree of back discomfort. Most back pain is related to the physical change that happens during pregnancy including hormones, changes in the center of gravity and posture. It's essential for pregnant women experiencing persistent or severe

back pain to consult with their healthcare provider to ensure there are no underlying issues and to receive appropriate guidance for managing and alleviating discomfort.

- Pelvic pain

Pelvic pain in pregnancy may be related to normal changes of pregnancy or may be a sign of a problem. It can occur normally as the bones and ligaments shift and stretch to accommodate the fetus. Some women may develop pelvic pain in pregnancy. This is sometimes called pregnancy-related pelvic girdle pain (PGP) or symphysis pubis dysfunction (SPD).

PGP is a collection of uncomfortable symptoms caused by a stiffness of your pelvic joints or the joints moving unevenly at either the back or front of your pelvis. Pelvic pain in pregnancy is common, affecting up to 1 in 5 pregnant women and birthing people. While most people have pain that they can manage themselves, some have pain that is severe enough to need medical help. It is advised that if a woman is experiencing back, pelvic, or hip pain during pregnancy, she should see a doctor. The doctor will ask about her medical history and do a physical examination. It is important to see a doctor so that one can be sure that the pain is because of PGP. The doctor may suggest that she see a physiotherapist. A physiotherapist can teach her exercises to help manage the pain. If the pain is severe and the woman is not improving with standard care, she may be referred to a specialist pain service.

Beyond the physiological impacts, these health problems can also have profound psychological effects on pregnant women. The stress, anxiety, and fear associated with managing gestational diabetes, hypertension, or anemia can exacerbate existing mental health conditions or lead to the development of new ones, such as depression or anxiety disorders. Additionally, the uncertainty surrounding potential complications and the need for medical interventions can heighten maternal distress and negatively impact maternal-fetal bonding and overall pregnancy experiences.

- **Barriers to Effective Health Care**

Despite the availability of healthcare services, pregnant women in Ovia-North East LGA often face barriers that hinder their access to and utilization of essential maternal health care. Socio-economic factors such as poverty, unemployment, and lack of health insurance coverage can limit women's ability to afford prenatal care visits, diagnostic tests, and medications, thereby delaying or preventing timely interventions for health problems. Cultural beliefs and practices surrounding pregnancy, childbirth, and healthcare seeking behaviors may also influence women's decisions to seek medical care, leading to delays in seeking appropriate treatment or adherence to recommended prenatal care guidelines (Okonjo-Iweala, 2003).

Moreover, geographical barriers, including inadequate transportation infrastructure and long distances to healthcare facilities, can further impede pregnant women's access to maternal health services. Women residing in rural or remote areas may face challenges

in accessing timely prenatal care, emergency obstetric services, and specialized medical interventions, increasing their risk of adverse pregnancy outcomes (Adebisi, 2004)

Addressing these barriers to effective health care requires a multi-faceted approach that addresses the underlying socio-economic, cultural, and geographical determinants of health. Strategies may include:

- Implementing community-based outreach programs to provide prenatal care services, health education, and support to pregnant women in remote or underserved areas.
- Strengthening healthcare infrastructure and workforce capacity to improve the availability and accessibility of maternal health services, including antenatal screenings, skilled birth attendance, and emergency obstetric care.
- Promoting cultural competence and sensitivity among healthcare providers to ensure respectful and patient-centered care that aligns with women's cultural beliefs and preferences.
- Enhancing social support networks and community partnerships to address socio-economic disparities and empower pregnant women to overcome barriers to healthcare access.

By addressing the health problems encountered by pregnant women and the barriers to effective health care, stakeholders can help promote equitable access to maternal health

services, improve pregnancy outcomes, and enhance the overall health and well-being of women and children in Ovia-North East LGA.

### **Benefits of improved health needs during pregnancy**

The benefits associated with effectively meeting the health needs of pregnant women, include reduced maternal mortality, improved maternal and fetal health, and enhanced long-term well-being for children (Chan, 2004).

#### **1. Reduced Maternal Mortality:**

Improving access to quality healthcare services and addressing the nutritional, psychological, and social support needs of pregnant women can contribute to a reduction in maternal mortality rates. Research has shown that timely prenatal care, skilled birth attendance, and access to emergency obstetric care are crucial factors in preventing maternal deaths. By ensuring that pregnant women receive adequate healthcare throughout pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period, stakeholders can help reduce the risk of maternal mortality and improve overall maternal health outcomes.

#### **2. Improved Maternal and Fetal Health:**

Meeting the health needs of pregnant women is associated with improved maternal and fetal health outcomes. Adequate nutrition during pregnancy supports fetal growth and development, reduces the risk of low birth weight and preterm birth, and enhances

maternal well-being. Access to comprehensive maternity care services allows for early detection and management of pregnancy complications, such as gestational diabetes and hypertension, reducing the likelihood of adverse outcomes for both mother and baby. Additionally, addressing the psychological and social support needs of pregnant women can mitigate stress, anxiety, and depression, leading to better mental health outcomes and improved pregnancy experiences.

### 3. Enhanced Long-Term Well-being for Children:

Investing in maternal health during pregnancy can have long-lasting benefits for children's health and development. Research has shown that maternal health during pregnancy influences children's health outcomes, cognitive development, and educational attainment. Improving maternal nutrition, access to healthcare services, and psychosocial support during pregnancy can contribute to healthier birth outcomes and reduce the risk of childhood morbidity and mortality. Furthermore, promoting maternal mental health and well-being can foster positive parent-child relationships and support children's socio-emotional development.

### 4. Nutritional Support:

Adequate nutrition and healthcare contribute to the proper nourishment of both the mother and the developing fetus, ensuring essential nutrients for growth and development. Improved health needs address nutritional requirements during pregnancy.

This includes guidance on a balanced diet, adequate hydration, and appropriate weight gain, ensuring that the mother and baby receive essential nutrients for optimal growth.

#### 5. Psychological Well-being:

Comprehensive care addresses the mental and emotional aspects of pregnancy, promoting positive mental health and reducing stress, which can have positive effects on both the mother and the baby. Pregnancy can be emotionally challenging, and improved health services provide emotional and psychological support through counseling, education, and resources. This can contribute to reduced stress and anxiety levels.

#### 6. Community Health:

A healthier pregnant population can lead to healthier communities by reducing the burden on healthcare systems and improving overall public health outcomes. Improved health during pregnancy contributes to overall community health. By reducing the burden on healthcare systems and preventing long-term health issues, there are potential economic and societal benefits.

#### 7. Educational Impact:

Healthy pregnancies often translate to healthier infants who may be better prepared for early childhood development and education. Mothers who receive adequate prenatal care are more likely to be informed about healthy behaviors during pregnancy. This

knowledge can translate into positive parenting practices, impacting the child's upbringing and educational opportunities.

Treating pregnant women's health requirements is critical for fostering positive maternal and neonatal outcomes, as well as improving children's long-term health. By assuring access to quality healthcare services, providing enough nutrition, and giving psychological and social support throughout pregnancy, stakeholders may help to reduce maternal mortality, improve maternal and fetal health, and enhance children's health and development. Investing in maternal health during pregnancy benefits not only individual mothers and their kids, but it also has far-reaching consequences for families, communities, and societies in general.

### **Ways to Eradicate Health Problems Encountered by Pregnant Women**

According to the Nigeria's Ministry of Health (MoH, 2016), addressing the health problems encountered by pregnant women is essential for improving maternal and neonatal outcomes and promoting overall maternal health. The various strategies and interventions were provided in eradicating these health problems and enhancing the well-being of pregnant women.

- Government and Policy Interventions:

Government and policy-level interventions play a crucial role in addressing health problems encountered by pregnant women. Policies aimed at improving access to

maternal healthcare services, such as antenatal care, skilled birth attendance, and emergency obstetric care, can help reduce maternal mortality and morbidity rates. Additionally, policies promoting nutrition education, supplementation programs, and micronutrient fortification can address nutritional deficiencies and prevent common pregnancy-related health problems, such as anemia and gestational diabetes. Strengthening health systems, increasing healthcare financing, and implementing quality assurance mechanisms are also essential for ensuring the effective delivery of maternal health services.

- Community-Based Approaches:

Community-based approaches have proven to be effective in addressing health problems encountered by pregnant women, particularly in resource-limited settings. Community health worker programs, outreach initiatives, and peer support groups can improve access to prenatal care services, provide health education, and facilitate early detection of pregnancy complications. Engaging communities in maternal health promotion activities, such as antenatal classes, breastfeeding support groups, and birth preparedness programs, can empower women to make informed decisions about their health and enhance community support systems for pregnant women.

- Education and Awareness Campaigns:

Education and awareness campaigns are critical for raising awareness about common health problems encountered by pregnant women and promoting healthy behaviors during pregnancy. Mass media campaigns, community radio programs, and educational materials can disseminate information about the importance of prenatal care, nutrition, and mental health support during pregnancy. Targeted messaging tailored to specific cultural and linguistic contexts can help address misconceptions, reduce stigma, and encourage positive health-seeking behaviors among pregnant women and their families.

- Integration of Services:

Integrating maternal health services with other healthcare programs, such as family planning, HIV/AIDS prevention, and child health services, can improve access to comprehensive care and address multiple health needs of pregnant women simultaneously. Co-location of services, task-sharing among healthcare providers, and multi-disciplinary care teams can streamline service delivery and improve health outcomes for pregnant women and their babies. Additionally, leveraging digital health technologies, such as mobile health applications and telemedicine platforms, can enhance access to maternal health services, particularly in remote or underserved areas.

## **Summary of Reviewed Literature**

The literature review delves into the multifaceted landscape of maternal health, with a focus on the health needs, problems, and potential solutions for pregnant women in Ovia-North East LGA of Edo State, Nigeria.

Maternal health needs refer to the specific requirements essential for maintaining the physical, emotional, and social well-being of pregnant women throughout the gestational period. Pregnant women in Ovia-North East LGA have diverse health needs, spanning nutritional, psychological, and social domains. These needs encompass various aspects, including but not limited to, access to quality healthcare services, adequate nutrition, psychological support, and safe birthing environments. Recognizing and addressing these needs are crucial for ensuring optimal maternal health outcomes.

Common health problems faced by pregnant women in the region include gestational diabetes, hypertension, anemia, back pain, pelvic pain and mental health disorders. These health problems can have significant physiological and psychological impacts on pregnant women and their babies, leading to adverse pregnancy outcomes if not adequately addressed.

Socio-economic and cultural factors contribute to barriers in accessing and benefiting from essential maternal health care services. Poverty, limited healthcare infrastructure, cultural beliefs, and geographic barriers hinder pregnant women from receiving timely

and appropriate healthcare, increasing the risk of maternal and neonatal morbidity and mortality.

Effectively meeting the health needs of pregnant women is associated with numerous benefits, including reduced maternal mortality, improved maternal and fetal health outcomes, and enhanced long-term well-being for children. Investment in maternal health during pregnancy yields positive returns, not only for individual women and their babies but also for families, communities, and societies as a whole.

Strategies to eradicate health problems encountered by pregnant women encompass government and policy interventions, community-based approaches, education and awareness campaigns, and integration of services. Collaborative efforts involving multiple stakeholders are essential for addressing the underlying determinants of maternal health and implementing targeted interventions to improve maternal and neonatal outcomes.

Conclusively, the reviewed literature highlights the importance of prioritizing maternal health and implementing evidence-based strategies to address the health needs and problems of pregnant women in Ovia-North East LGA. By understanding the unique challenges faced by pregnant women and working towards comprehensive solutions, stakeholders can contribute to improving maternal health outcomes and promoting health equity in the region.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHOD OF THE STUDY**

This chapter describes the research methodology that was used in the study under the following sub-headings:

- Design of the Study
- Population of the Study
- Sample and Sample Technique
- Research Instrument
- Validity of the Instrument
- Reliability of the Study
- Method of Data Collection
- Method of Data Analysis

#### **Research Design**

This study employs a descriptive cross-sectional survey design to investigate the health needs and health problems of prenatal women in Ovia Northeast Local Government Area (LGA) of Edo State. This design was chosen because it allows for the collection of data at a single point in time from a representative sample of the population, providing a snapshot of the current health issues and requirements (Crosby, 2006). Therefore, the design is suitable for this study.

## **Population for the Study**

The population for this study consists of all prenatal women residing in Ovia Northeast LGA of Edo State. This includes women receiving or not receiving antenatal care at health facilities. The focus on this specific population is driven by the need to understand the unique health needs and problems faced by prenatal women in this geographic area.

## **Sample and Sampling Techniques**

A sample size of 60 prenatal women was determined using a multistage sampling technique. Initially, a simple random sampling method was used to select six districts/areas from a list of all districts/areas in the Local Government Area. Subsequently, systematic random sampling was used to select 10 prenatal women from each district/area, ensuring a representative sample.

S/N	NAME OF DISTRICT/AREA	SAMPLE
1	Adolor	10
2	Iguoshodin	10
3	Isiuwa	10
4	Oghede	10
5	Oduna	10
6	Oluku	10
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>60</b>

*Source:* <https://nigeriazipcodes.com/edo-state-zip-code-complete-towns-villages-list/>

### **Instrument for Data Collection**

Data was collected using a structured self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into two sections: A, and B. Section A contains items on personal data of the respondents while section B comprised of statements from the research questions arranged on a Four-point Likert-scale format of Strongly Agreed, Agreed, Disagreed, and Strongly Disagreed.

### **Validity of the instrument**

The research instrument was given to the researcher's project supervisor and two other experts in the Department of Health, Safety and Environmental Education to validate the instrument. Corrections were incorporated.

### **Reliability of the Instrument**

The test re-test method was employed. The instrument was administered to 10 other prenatal women who were not part of the study sample. The data collected from the two groups was subjected to Pearson's  $r$  to ensure reliability of the instrument. A correlation coefficient of 0.724 was obtained which indicates that the instrument is reliable.

### **Method of Data Collection**

Collection of completed questionnaire was done same day the instrument was administered. The researcher used this strategy to guarantee that time was spent wisely and that no copies of the questionnaires were lost.

### **Method of Data Analysis**

The method used for data analysis includes the descriptive statistics of frequency counts and percentages.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

This chapter presents the findings from the survey conducted to investigate the health needs and problems of prenatal women in Ovia Northeast Local Government Area (LGA) of Edo State. Sixty (60) copies of the questionnaire were distributed, and all were returned representing a 100% return rate. The following results were derived from the data collected and were presented as shown below:

**Research Question 1:** What are the Health Needs of Prenatal Women in Ovia North-East Local Government Area of Edo state.

Table 1: Respondents' View on Health Needs of Prenatal Women

S/N	ITEM	SA	A	D	SD
1	I often feel the need for prenatal health education or counseling	24 (40%)	20 (33.3%)	10 (16.7%)	6 (10%)
2	I have access to nutritious food that supports a healthy pregnancy	20 (33.3%)	24 (40%)	6 (10%)	10 (16.7%)
3	I understand the importance of proper nutrition during pregnancy	28 (46.7%)	16 (26.7%)	12 (20%)	4 (6.6%)
4	The healthcare providers in my area are knowledgeable about prenatal care	26 (43.3%)	12 (20%)	8 (13.3%)	14 (23.4%)
5	I regularly attend prenatal check-ups as recommended	24 (40%)	20 (33.3%)	10 (16.7%)	6 (10%)
6	I have reliable transportation to reach my healthcare facility	22 (37%)	13 (21%)	7 (12%)	18 (30%)
7	I have health insurance that covers my prenatal care needs	16 (26.6%)	14 (23.4%)	18 (30%)	12 (20%)
8	Community health programs can effectively address the health issues of pregnant women.	20 (33.3%)	24 (40%)	6 (10%)	10 (16.7%)

Data in table 1 revealed respondents' view on Health Needs of Prenatal Women in Ovia North-East Local Government Area of Edo state. 73% of respondents (40% SA, 33.3% A) feel the need for prenatal health education or counseling, indicating a significant demand for these services. 73.3% of respondents (33.3% SA, 40% A) have access to nutritious food, but 26.7% (10% D, 16.7% SD) report issues, suggesting some gaps in food security. 73.4% of respondents (46.7% SA, 26.7% A) understand the importance of proper nutrition, showing strong awareness, though 26.6% of respondents (20% D, 6.6% SD) lack this understanding. 63.3% of respondents (43.3% SA, 20% A) find healthcare providers knowledgeable, but a notable 36.7% of respondents (13.3% D, 23.4% SD) do not, indicating a need for improved training. 73.3% of respondents (40% SA, 33.3% A) regularly attend check-ups, while 26.7% (16.7% D, 10% SD) do not, highlighting a gap in consistent prenatal care. Only 58% of respondents (37% SA, 21% A) have reliable transportation, while a significant 42% (12% D, 30% SD) face transportation issues, which could impact healthcare access. 50% of respondents (26.6% SA, 23.4% A) have health insurance, while the other 50% (30% D, 20% SD) do not, indicating a substantial need for better insurance coverage. 73.3% of respondents (33.3% SA, 40% A) believe in the effectiveness of community health programs, though 26.7% (10% D, 16.7% SD) are skeptical, suggesting room for program improvement. These findings highlight key areas for improvement in prenatal health education, access to nutritious food, transportation, healthcare provider training, and insurance coverage for prenatal women in Ovia North-East Local Government Area of Edo state.

**Research Question 2:** What are the Health Problems encountered by Prenatal Women in Ovia North-East Local Government Area of Edo state.

**Table 2:** Respondents' View on Health Problems encountered by Prenatal Women

S/N	ITEM	SA	A	D	SD
9	During my pregnancy, I have experienced specific health conditions (e.g., gestational diabetes, hypertension, preeclampsia).	10 (16.7%)	7 (11.7%)	20 (33.3%)	23 (38.3%)
10	There are dietary restrictions in my community that affect my prenatal health	10 (16.7%)	14 (23.3%)	16 (26.7%)	20 (33.3%)
11	My living environment is unsafe for a pregnant woman.	12 (20%)	11 (18.3%)	21 (35%)	16 (26.7%)
12	I have experienced common pregnancy symptoms (e.g., morning sickness, fatigue, swelling feet).	24 (40%)	20 (33.3%)	10 (16.7%)	6 (10%)
13	My living environment is healthy for a pregnant woman	21 (35%)	16 (26.7%)	13 (21.6%)	10 (16.7%)
14	The severity of my pregnancy symptoms has been manageable.	13 (21.6%)	17 (28.4%)	12 (20%)	18 (30%)
15	I have had complications during this pregnancy.	20 (33.3%)	24 (40%)	6 (10%)	10 (16.7%)

Data in table 2 revealed respondents' view on Health Problems encountered by Prenatal Women in Ovia Northeast LGA in Edo state. 28.4% of respondents (16.7% SA, 11.7% A) experienced specific health conditions like gestational diabetes, hypertension, and preeclampsia, while a majority of 71.6% (33.3% D, 38.3% SD) did not, indicating that while prevalent, these conditions are not universal. 40% of respondents (16.7% SA, 23.3% A) reported dietary restrictions affecting their prenatal health, whereas 60% (26.7% D, 33.3% SD) did not, highlighting that dietary restrictions are significant for some but not all. 38.3% of respondents (20% SA, 18.3% A) felt their living environment was unsafe, while 61.7% (35% D, 26.7% SD) felt it was safe, indicating a mixed perception of environmental safety. A large majority of 73.3% (40% SA, 33.3% A) experienced common pregnancy symptoms, showing these symptoms are widespread. 61.7% (35% SA, 26.7% A) believed their living environment was healthy, while 38.3% (21.6% D, 16.7% SD) did not, suggesting that most find their environment supportive. 50% (21.6% SA, 28.4% A) found the severity of their pregnancy symptoms manageable, whereas 50% (20% D, 30% SD) did not, showing an equal split in the manageability of symptoms. A significant 73.3% (33.3% SA, 40% A) experienced complications during pregnancy, while 26.7% (10% D, 16.7% SD) did not, highlighting a notable prevalence of complications.

These findings point to various health problems faced by prenatal women in Ovia North-East Local Government Area of Edo state., including specific health conditions, dietary restrictions, unsafe living environments, common pregnancy symptoms, and pregnancy complications, with differing levels of manageability and environmental health perceptions.

**Research Question 3: How can the problems encountered by pregnant women in Ovia North-East Local Government Area of Edo State be resolved?**

Table 3: Respondents' View on Resolution of Encountered Health Problems

S/N	ITEM	SA	A	D	SD
16	Improving the quality and accessibility of prenatal healthcare services will significantly address the challenges faced by pregnant women	23 (38.3%)	20 (33.3%)	10 (16.7%)	7 (11.7%)
17	Providing better transportation options for pregnant women to reach healthcare facilities will help in resolving many of their issues	20 (33.3%)	16 (26.7%)	14 (23.3%)	10 (16.7%)
18	Increasing public awareness and education about maternal health can effectively reduce the problems experienced by pregnant women in this area.	21 (35%)	16 (26.7%)	12 (20%)	11 (18.3%)
19	Offering financial support to cover the medical expenses of pregnant women will significantly alleviate their difficulties	24 (40%)	20 (33.3%)	10 (16.7%)	6 (10%)
20	Enhancing the availability of nutritional support and supplements for pregnant women will greatly benefit their health and well-being	21 (35%)	16 (26.7%)	13 (21.6%)	10 (16.7%)

Data in table 3 revealed respondents' view on resolution of encountered health problems. 71.6% of respondents (38.3% SA, 33.3% A) believe that improving the quality and accessibility of prenatal healthcare services will significantly address the challenges faced by pregnant women, while a minority of 28.4% (16.7% D, 11.7% SD)

disagree. 60% (33.3% SA, 26.7% A) agree that providing better transportation options will help resolve issues, while 40% (23.3% D, 16.7% SD) disagree, indicating mixed perceptions on the impact of transportation improvements. 61.7% (35% D, 26.7% SD) support increasing public awareness and education about maternal health as an effective solution, whereas 38.3% (20% D, 18.3% SD) do not see it as sufficiently effective on its own. A significant majority of 73.3% (40% SA, 33.3% A) believe that offering financial support to cover medical expenses will significantly alleviate difficulties, with only 26.7% (16.7% D, 10% SD) disagreeing, highlighting strong support for financial interventions. 61.7% (35% SA, 26.7% A) agree that enhancing the availability of nutritional support and supplements will greatly benefit health and well-being, while 38.3% (21.6% D, 16.7% SD) disagree, showing overall positive but not unanimous support for nutritional interventions.

These findings suggest that while there are skepticism, the majority affirms that all interventions are seen as the effective measures for resolving health problems among prenatal women in Ovia North-East Local Government Area of Edo state.

**Research Question 4:** What are the benefits of proper health needs during the period of gestation?

**Table 4:** Respondents' View on benefits of proper health needs?

S/N	ITEM	SA	A	D	SD
21	Proper prenatal care significantly reduces the risk of complications during childbirth	21 (35%)	16 (26.7%)	12 (20%)	11 (18.3%)
22	Receiving adequate nutrition during pregnancy is crucial for the healthy development of the babies	21 (35%)	16 (26.7%)	13 (21.6%)	10 (16.7%)
23	Proper health education during pregnancy empowers mothers to make informed decisions about their well-being and that of their baby	15 (25%)	17 (28.3%)	10 (16.7%)	18 (30%)
24	Regular prenatal check-ups help in early detection and management of potential health issues in both mother and baby	24 (40%)	20 (33.3%)	10 (16.7%)	6 (10%)
25	Emotional and psychological support during pregnancy contributes to better mental health outcomes for expectant mothers.	21 (35%)	16 (26.7%)	13 (21.6%)	10 (16.7%)

Data in table 4 revealed respondents' view on benefits of proper health needs. 61.7% of respondents (35% SA, 26.7% A) believe that proper prenatal care significantly reduces the risk of complications during childbirth, while a minority of 38.3% (20% D, 18.3% SD). 61.7% (35% SA, 26.7% A) agree that receiving adequate nutrition during pregnancy is crucial for the healthy development of the babies, but 38.3% (21.6% D, 16.7% SD) disagree, suggesting that not all respondents recognize the importance of nutrition. 53.3% (25% SA, 28.3% A) believe that proper health education during pregnancy empowers mothers to make informed decisions, while 46.7% (16.7% D, 30% SD) disagree. A significant majority of 73.3% (40% SA, 33.3% A) believe that regular prenatal check-ups help in early detection and management of potential health issues, with only 26.7% (16.7% D, 10% SD) disagreeing, showing strong support for regular check-ups. 61.7% (35% SA, 26.7% A) agree that emotional and psychological support during pregnancy contributes to better mental health outcomes, while 38.3% (21.6% D, 16.7% SD) disagree, indicating that most respondents see value in emotional support.

These findings highlight that while there is strong support for regular prenatal check-ups, proper prenatal care, emotional support, and the importance of nutrition but there is significant skepticism about the benefit of empowerment provided by health education during pregnancy in Ovia North-East Local Government Area of Edo state.

## **Discussion of Findings**

The findings in (Table 1) revealed that a significant portion of respondents expressed “A need for prenatal health education and counseling” – this aligns with the assertion by Wold (2012), who affirms that Education and counseling are vital components of prenatal care as they empower women to make informed decisions about their health and that of their babies. “Access to Nutritious Food” – a greater number of respondents indicated they have access to nutritious food, while others reported issues, highlighting gaps in food security. According to the World Health Organization (2016), adequate nutrition during pregnancy is essential for the health of both the mother and the developing fetus, and any gaps in food security must be addressed promptly. “Knowledgeable Healthcare Providers” – majority of respondents believe healthcare providers are knowledgeable about prenatal care, yet a minority feel otherwise. This finding resonates with the statement by American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG, 2018): Continuous training and education for healthcare providers are crucial to ensure they can offer the best prenatal care. “Transportation Issues” – only an average number of respondents have reliable transportation to healthcare facilities. As noted by Peters et al. (2008), "Transportation is a critical barrier to accessing healthcare services, particularly in rural areas, and addressing this can significantly improve health outcomes."

The findings in (Table 2) revealed several health problems encountered by Prenatal Women in Ovia North-East Local Government Area of Edo state. These include “Specific Health Conditions such as gestational diabetes and hypertension” – this aligns with the assertions of Cunningham et al. (2014), who submitted that pregnancy-related conditions like gestational diabetes and hypertension are common and require proper management to prevent complications. “Dietary Restrictions” – this is supported by Langley-Evans (2015), who states that cultural and community-based dietary restrictions can significantly impact the nutritional status of pregnant women, necessitating culturally sensitive nutritional guidance. “Unsafe Living Environment” – this aligns with the findings of Grosse (2016), who noted that the safety of the living environment plays a crucial role in the overall health and well-being of pregnant women. “Common Pregnancy Symptoms such as morning sickness, fatigue, swelling feet” – this is echoed by Monga (2011), who affirms that common pregnancy symptoms are prevalent among expectant mothers and require appropriate management and support.

The findings in (Table 3) revealed several strategies agreed by prenatal women to mitigate health problems encountered by them in Ovia North-East Local Government Area of Edo state. One method is by “Improving Healthcare Services”; however, some respondents believe improving healthcare services alone will not address challenges. This skepticism is supported by Bhutta et al. (2010), who argue that while improving

healthcare services is essential, it must be part of a holistic approach that includes education, support, and infrastructure development. “Better Transportation Options” – respondents agree that better transportation options will help resolve issues. According to Delamou et al. (2015), enhancing transportation infrastructure is vital for ensuring timely access to healthcare services, especially in rural areas in the Local Government Area. “Public Awareness and Education” – this is reinforced by Lassi et al. (2014), who state that public awareness and education campaigns are effective in reducing maternal and prenatal health problems by empowering women with knowledge and resources. “Financial Support” – A significant number believe financial support will alleviate difficulties. As noted by Kerber et al. (2007), financial barriers are a major hindrance to accessing prenatal care, and providing financial support can significantly improve health outcomes. “Nutritional Support and Supplements” – this finding is supported by Allen (2005), who asserts that nutritional supplements during pregnancy are crucial for preventing deficiencies and promoting fetal development.

The findings in (Table 4) revealed the benefits of proper health needs during the period of gestation. “Reduction of Childbirth Complications” – this aligns with the statement by Conde-Agudelo et al. (2008), who assert that proper prenatal care significantly reduces the risk of complications during childbirth. “Adequate Nutrition for Healthy Development” – this is supported by Barker (1998), who states that maternal nutrition during pregnancy has long-lasting effects on the health and development of the child. “Empowerment through Health Education” – this finding is echoed by Davis et al.

(2014) who agrees that Health education during pregnancy equips mothers with the knowledge and skills to make informed health decisions. “Regular Prenatal Check-up”; indeed, regular check-ups help in early detection and management of potential health issues. As per WHO (2016): Regular prenatal check-ups are essential for monitoring the health of both mother and baby and for early detection of potential problems. “Emotional and Psychological Support” – this is supported by Dunkel Schetter (2011), who states, "Emotional and psychological support during pregnancy is crucial for the mental well-being of expectant mothers."

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary

This study aimed to investigate the health needs and health problems of prenatal women in Ovia Northeast Local Government Area of Edo State, Nigeria. To achieve the purpose of the study four research questions were posed to guide the study. The reviewed literature highlights the importance of prioritizing maternal health and implementing evidence-based strategies to address the health needs and problems of pregnant women in Ovia-Northeast LGA. A descriptive cross-sectional survey design was adopted for this study. The multistage sampling technique was used to select 60 respondents for this study. The research instrument was validated by the researcher's project supervisor and corrections made were incorporated into the instrument. The test re-test method was employed to ensure reliability of the instrument; thus, a correlation coefficient of 0.724 was obtained which indicated that the instrument was reliable. The instrument used for data collection was the researcher structured self-administered questionnaire. Collection of completed questionnaire was done same day the instrument was administered.

At the end of the day, the findings made revealed that:

1. The health needs of prenatal women in Ovia Northeast LGA of Edo state include improvement in prenatal health education or counseling, access to nutritious food,

transportation, healthcare provider training, and insurance coverage for prenatal women.

2. Common health problems encountered by prenatal women in Ovia Northeast LGA in Edo state include specific health conditions such as gestational diabetes and hypertension, dietary restrictions due to cultural practices, unsafe living environments, common pregnancy symptoms such as morning sickness, fatigue, and swelling feet, and pregnancy complications, with differing levels of manageability and environmental health perceptions.
3. Strategies to mitigate health problems faced by prenatal women in Ovia Northeast LGA in Edo state include financial support, nutritional interventions, effectiveness of healthcare service improvements, better transportation, and public education.
4. Benefits of proper health needs during the period of gestation include reduction in the risk of complications during childbirth, healthy development of the babies, mother's empowerment to make informed decisions about their well-being and that of their baby, early detection, and management of potential health issues in both mother and baby, and better mental health outcomes for expectant mothers.

## **Conclusion**

The study concludes that prenatal women in Ovia North-East Local Government Area face significant health needs and challenges. Key areas requiring attention include enhancing prenatal health education, improving access to nutritious food, addressing

transportation barriers, and providing financial support. There is also a need to increase the effectiveness and utilization of community health programs. Proper health needs during pregnancy are crucial for reducing complications, promoting healthy fetal development, and ensuring the overall well-being of mothers and babies.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made:

### **To the Government**

- Invest in building and upgrading healthcare facilities in Ovia North-East Local Government Area to ensure they are well-equipped to handle prenatal care needs.
- Develop and fund educational campaigns that focus on the importance of prenatal care, nutrition, and regular check-ups.
- Create and implement financial assistance programs to help cover the costs of prenatal care and related medical expenses for low-income families.
- Support and expand community health programs that offer prenatal care services, including mobile clinics and outreach programs.

## **To Stakeholders (Non-Governmental Organizations, Community Leaders, Healthcare Providers)**

- Organize and fund workshops, seminars, and community outreach programs focused on prenatal health education.
- Provide transportation services or support to ensure pregnant women can attend regular check-ups and receive timely care.
- Establish support groups and counseling services to help pregnant women cope with the emotional and psychological challenges of pregnancy.
- Train healthcare providers to recognize and address mental health issues in pregnant women.
- Engage in advocacy efforts to influence government policies related to maternal health, ensuring they address the specific needs of prenatal women.

## **To Prenatal Women**

- Attend all scheduled prenatal check-ups and follow the advice of healthcare providers to ensure both your health and the health of your baby.
- Ensure you consume a balanced diet rich in essential nutrients needed for a healthy pregnancy.
- Avoid harmful substances such as alcohol, tobacco, and drugs.
- Take advantage of available educational resources to learn about prenatal care, nutrition, and the importance of regular check-ups.

- Join local support groups or online forums to share experiences and gain insights from other expectant mothers.
- Take advantage of community health programs, financial assistance, and transportation services offered in your area.
- Participate in safe and appropriate physical activities as recommended by your healthcare provider to maintain your health and well-being during pregnancy.

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**APPENDIX**

**QUESTIONNAIRE**

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL  
EDUCATION**

**FACULTY OF EDUCATION**

**UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY, EDO STATE.**

Dear Respondents,

The Researcher is a student of the above-named institution, conducting research on **Health needs and health problems of prenatal women in Ovia Northeast Local Government Area of Edo State, Nigeria**. Please kindly respond sincerely to the questions by ticking [] where applicable. Your responses, which are needed for research purposes only, will be treated with high level of confidentiality.

Thank you.

**CHIKAEZE**, Chioma Stephanie

**Section A: Demographic Characteristics**

1. Age: Under 18 (  ), 18-24 (  ), 25-34 (  ), 35-44 (  ), 45 and above (  )
2. Marital Status: Single (  ), Married (  ), Divorced (  ), Widowed (  )
3. Religion: Christianity (  ), Islam (  ), Traditional (  )
4. Educational Level: No formal education (  ), Primary education (  ), Secondary education (  ), Tertiary education (  ), Postgraduate education (  )
5. Employment Status: Unemployed (  ), Employed (  ), Student (  )

**Section B: Statements from the research questions**

Check the following statements and tick [] the column that applies to you.

Note: SA = Strongly Agreed. A = Agreed. D = Disagreed. SD = Strongly Disagreed

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD
1	I often feel the need for prenatal health education or counseling				

2	I have access to nutritious food that supports a healthy pregnancy				
3	I understand the importance of proper nutrition during pregnancy				
4	The healthcare providers in my area are knowledgeable about prenatal care				
5	I regularly attend prenatal check-ups as recommended				
6	I have reliable transportation to reach my healthcare facility				
7	I have health insurance that covers my prenatal care needs				
8	Community health programs can effectively address the health issues of pregnant women.				
9	During my pregnancy, I have experienced specific health conditions (e.g., gestational diabetes, hypertension, preeclampsia).				
10	There are dietary restrictions in my community that affect my prenatal health				
11	My living environment is unsafe for a pregnant woman.				
12	I have experienced common pregnancy symptoms (e.g., morning sickness, fatigue, swelling feet).				
13	My living environment is healthy for a pregnant woman				
14	The severity of my pregnancy symptoms has been manageable.				
15	I have had complications during this pregnancy.				
16	Improving the quality and accessibility of prenatal				

	healthcare services will significantly address the challenges faced by pregnant women				
17	Providing better transportation options for pregnant women to reach healthcare facilities will help in resolving many of their issues				
18	Increasing public awareness and education about maternal health can effectively reduce the problems experienced by pregnant women in this area.				
19	Offering financial support to cover the medical expenses of pregnant women will significantly alleviate their difficulties				
20	Enhancing the availability of nutritional support and supplements for pregnant women will greatly benefit their health and well-being				
21	Proper prenatal care significantly reduces the risk of complications during childbirth				
22	Receiving adequate nutrition during pregnancy is crucial for the healthy development of the babies				
23	Proper health education during pregnancy empowers mothers to make informed decisions about their well-being and that of their baby				
24	Regular prenatal check-ups help in early detection and management of potential health issues in both mother and baby				
25	Emotional and psychological support during pregnancy contributes to better mental health outcomes for expectant mothers.				