SUMMARY

Background: Pregnancy and delivery constitute a period of significant life changes in women with associated major physiological and psychological adjustments often associated with anxiety and stress. Providing family support by husbands/family members to the women is expected to reduce this stress and improve delivery outcomes.

Objectives: The general objective was to determine the impact of family support for pregnant women on delivery outcomes in Our Lady of Apostles Hospital Jos, as a step towards reducing infant and maternal mortality in Nigeria. The specific objectives included the following:-

1. Determining the sociodemographic characteristics of the study participants, proportion of women accompanied by husband/family member to the ANC and/or during labour, level of family support of participants using the perceived social support–family scale, relationship between sociodemographic characteristics and the level of family support, delivery outcomes of study participants and correlation with the level of family support.

Design: An observational study of a cross section of pregnant women attending ANC at OLA hospital, Jos. A total of 350 women were recruited at the ANC and followed up till delivery. All participants completed the study. The level of family support was assessed using a questionnaire and the delivery outcomes measured after delivery. There were three levels of family support (ie strong, weak and none). Maternal delivery outcomes included maternal morbidity/mortality, duration of labour and mode/route of delivery. Fetal outcomes included gestational age at birth, delivery status of fetus, birth weight, Apgar score and fetal morbidity/mortality at birth.

Results: There was a significant difference in both maternal and fetal delivery outcomes in relation to the various levels of family support at p-value of 0.01. Strong family support impacted positively on the delivery outcomes while weak/no family support impacted negatively.

Conclusion: Delivery outcomes can be improved by strengthening the family support for women.