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Research Paper

Minor ailments during pregnancy among primigravida women at Al-Diwanyiah Governorate

Fadia Hussein Ali[1*], Haider Abd AL Ameer Twair AL Hamad[2]
[1*]Lecturer, PHD. Maternal and Neonate Health Nursing College of Nursing / University of Al-Qadisiyah, Iraq.
[2]Lecturer, PhD. Adults Nursing, College of Nursing, University of Al-Qadisiyah, Iraq.

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ABSTRACT

Background: Pregnancy, particularly the first, is commonly accompanied by minor physical discomforts that affect maternal wellbeing, with self-management practices such as home remedies frequently used for relief.
Objective: To determine the incidence of minor ailments among primigravida (first-time pregnant) women during pregnancy and assess the extent of home-remedy use for symptom relief.
Methods: A descriptive study was conducted at a maternal and pediatric teaching hospital in Al-Diwaniyah governorate, Iraq, among 100 primigravida women selected via non-probability convenience sampling between March and July 2023. Data were analyzed using SPSS version 27, with results presented as frequencies and percentages.
Results: Most participants (68%) were aged 20–35 years, 36% had completed intermediate school, 53% were housewives, and 67% resided in urban areas. Most (87%) were in their second trimester, and 55% reported a planned pregnancy. Morning sickness (80%), frequent urination (77%), and back pain (75%) were the most commonly reported discomforts; insomnia (22%) was least common. Home remedies were used by 74% of participants.
Conclusion: All primigravida women experienced minor pregnancy-related discomforts to varying degrees, irrespective of gestational age, with morning sickness most prevalent and insomnia least common. Nearly three-quarters used home remedies. Prenatal health education on minor discomforts and appropriate self-care is recommended.

Corresponding Author:
Fadia Hussein Ali
Lecturer, PHD. Maternal and Neonate Health Nursing College of Nursing / University of Al-Qadisiyah, Iraq.
Email: Fadia.ali@qu.edu.iq

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1. INTRODUCTION

Pregnancy is the state in which a developing embryo or fetus is carried inside the female uterus. Throughout pregnancy, there are a variety of physiological and psychological changes that may affect the mother, her fetus, and her family [1].

The typical event in a woman's life is becoming pregnant; each pregnancy is a unique experience for the woman and will be sufficiently distinct from the previous one. Pregnancy-related anatomical and physiological changes, coupled with hormonal effects and the body's adjustment to the changing reproductive environment, can cause a number of discomforts known as "minor pregnancy discomforts or ailments" [2], [3].

These mild disorders are brought on by hormonal, accommodative, metabolic, and postural changes. The majority of these ailments are manageable at home and are simply a normal aspect of pregnancy; they are not dangerous. During the first trimester of pregnancy, common discomfort include nausea, vomiting, weakness, and frequent micturition. In the second trimester, backache, constipation, and vaginal discharge are common symptoms. The third trimester is marked by the following symptoms: leg cramps, edema, shifting feelings and emotions, insomnia, and hemorrhoids. These minor aches and pains are signs, and as a result, the body is typically getting ready for a new life [4], [5], [6].

In order to determine the frequency of minor illnesses and the home care strategies used by antenatal primigravida mothers to treat minor ailments during pregnancy, [7] Conducted a descriptive study. Using the purposive sample technique, a convenient sample of thirty pregnant women was chosen. One of the study's key conclusions was that every pregnant mother had some kind of minor ailment during her pregnancy, and some of those mothers also used home care for those minor ailments [7].

Using a purposive sample technique, [4] conducted a descriptive study on the knowledge of primi mothers on self-management of minor pregnancy discomfort on 100 primigravida mothers in Mangalore. Only 12% of respondents demonstrated a high level of understanding about minor pregnancy discomforts and how to manage them on their own [4].

However, these mild discomforts can be made better for expectant mothers with appropriate explanations and easy remedies. Pregnancy often causes minor discomforts, so non-pharmacological therapies solutions should be tried before turning to pharmaceutical therapy. In order to lessen these discomforts, self-management is crucial [8].

Even though these conditions are not life-threatening, prior research on minor pregnancy discomforts has demonstrated that their high prevalence among expectant mothers has a significant negative impact on productivity and may play a major role in maternal mortality and morbidity. The primary goal of the research is to determine how common minor ailments are in expectant mothers and whether they can be treated at home by these women.

2. RELATED WORK

The study carried out by Nikhila and co-researchers involved an investigation on the effects of nursing interventions on minor complications in antenatal primigravida women. Physiological changes during pregnancy usually lead to common mild symptoms like constipation and edema in feet. The sample included sixty pregnant women who were purposively selected from the group of primary gravida using a quasi-experimental pretest posttest control group design. The results indicated that nursing intervention helped in reducing foot edema and constipation of the experimental group, whereas the control group did not receive such benefits. A study focuses on the role of nursing interventions for minor ailments during pregnancy and how they can contribute towards enhancing well-being among mothers-to-be. Self-

instructional module was evaluated for its effectiveness in improving knowledge and adherence to remedial practices among primigravida women. Using a quasi-experimental approach with a one-group pre-test/post-test design, data were collected through self-administered questionnaires.

As for the findings, they indicate that the tool has a strong impact on pregnant women's ability to develop knowledge, attitudes, and satisfaction about healthcare. In this study, after intervention, statistically significant results were found for the decline in minor ailments. Also, it is noticed that people have good information and are more careful when using such resources. This research focuses on the significance of self-teaching materials aimed at teaching adolescent girls who will bear children how to prevent or cope with routine prenatal issues, which are based on their conditions and are very essential for their future health.. The study aimed to investigate the extent of knowledge and practices among primigravida women concerning minor and usual pregnancy discomforts. Data were gathered using a descriptive cross-sectional design, which helped observe what women think and do regarding minor discomforts during pregnancy. The results of this study indicated that the majority of primigravida women possessed good knowledge on how to handle certain pregnancy discomforts utilizing appropriate practices. It is suggested by the study to perform additional research in order to define the relationships between hazardous behavior and pregnancy in a more comprehensive way. However, authors have not mentioned the specific limitations of this paper; nonetheless, the article concentrates on how it is important for a responsible attitude towards pregnant women's behavior and safe practices that should be generally promoted throughout the whole period of gestation.

3. METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to find out the number of minor disorders among primigravida and pregnant women and the home remedies they use to treat such disorders. The sample was selected using a nonprobability convenience sampling technique and included 100 pregnant women who were attending the Al-Diwaniyah Maternity and Pediatric Teaching Hospital from March to July 2023. Women admitted to the hospital during the data collection period were eligible for inclusion in this study after obtaining their written consent.

To gather the required data, the researcher employed an original questionnaire that was developed for this purpose. This instrument consisted of three sections: the first one where respondents reported sociodemographic variables; the second section involved questions related to reproductive variables, and finally, there was a third part that evaluated minor discomforts and allowed respondents to indicate whether they experienced them or not by selecting either "Yes" or "No". For processing and analyzing collected data, version 27 of SPSS software was utilized. The obtained findings were summarized with descriptive statistics, which contained frequencies and percentages.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Study Sample Distribution based on Sociodemographic Variables

Demographics Data	Rating	Frequency	%
Age	less than20	16	16%
	20-30	64	64%
	30+	20	20%
Level of education	Illiterate	28	28%
	Intermediate	36	36%
	Secondary	21	21%
	College or institute	15	15%
Occupation	Employee	47	47%
	House wife	53	53%
Residence	Urban	67	67%

	Rural	33	33%

Table 1 presents the demographic variables of the expectant mothers. In terms of age, the majority of mothers (64%) fell between the ages of 20 and 30. In terms of education, (36%) of the subjects completed the intermediate school. While, (53%) of them were housewives and (47%) of them were employee. Regarding residency, (67%) of them reside in cities.

Table 2. Distribution of Study Sample According to Reproductive Variables

Variables	Frequency (F)	Percent
Planned pregnancy	87	87%
Yes		
No	13	13%
Gestational age	34	34%
1st trimester		
2nd trimester	55	55%
3rd trimester	11	11%

According to Table 2, (87%)of pregnant women report that their pregnancy was planned. (55%) of pregnant women were in their second trimester, followed by their first and third trimesters (34% and 11%, respectively).

Table 3. Incidence of Minor Ailments among Primigravida

Minor Discomforts	Yes		No	
	F	%	F	%
Fatigue	62	62	38	38
Backache	75	75	25	25
Morning sickness	80	80	20	20
Heartburn	43	43	57	57
Constipation	53	53	47	47
Frequency of urination	77	77	23	23
Excessive white discharge	51	51	49	49
Leg cramps	27	27	73	73
Varicose vein	34	34	66	66
Hemorrhoids	45	45	55	55
Edema	54	54	46	46
Insomnia	22	22	88	88
Do you use any home remedies to manage these discomforts?	74	74	26	26

Table 3 showed that the discomforts that they reported experiencing most frequently were morning sickness (80%), frequency of urination (77%), backache (75%), and insomnia (22%). However, (74%) of primigravida mothers used various home remedies to treat these discomforts.

4.1 Discussion

Our results showed that, among all minor discomforts, morning sickness or nausea and vomiting, frequent urination, and backache were the most common ailments during their pregnancy. This suggests that the findings may be related to the fact that over half of the study participants were in the second trimester of pregnancy which these ailments more reported during this trimester. In the first and early stages of the second trimester of pregnancy, between (50%) and (80%) of women experience nausea and vomiting [9]. According to a study by Patil & Salunkhe , most study participants experienced nausea and vomiting during the first trimester of pregnancy. This finding is consistent with their findings [10].

Additionally, Pluvio results support the concept that over half of nausea and vomiting cases occurred during the first trimester [11]. Similar results were found in a study conducted in India by Kaur and Gagandeep, which showed that the majority of pregnant mothers experience nausea and vomiting frequently [12]. The same outcome was reported by Carvalho [13], who stated that 50% of the study group had low back pain. Sreelekshmi and Chacko studied the frequency of minor pregnancy-related discomforts in expectant mothers. The results of the study show that tiredness (80%), discomfort in the back (70%), cramps in the legs (55%), nausea and vomiting (80%), and frequency of micturition (80%) are the most common minor illnesses [14].

Pregnant women often use home remedies based on their cultures and beliefs to relieve minor ailments that arise during pregnancy. Fortunately, the majority of these discomforts will subside as the pregnancy goes on. Our results support that which a high percentage of participants use various home remedies to manage these discomforts when it's important for their health to be protected.

Pregnancy-related minor discomforts can be managed with appropriate diagnosis, easy treatments, and lifestyle modifications. Educating women about self-care will also help to minimize pregnancy-related discomforts and ensure a healthy pregnancy that is both physically and emotionally safe for the mother, child, and family [15]. These findings are consistent with the descriptive cross-sectional study conducted by Jarrah to investigate the use of home remedies by pregnant Bangalorean women. a practical sample comprising 332 expectant mothers. About 75% of participants reported using over-the-counter medications because they believed home remedies to be more effective [16], [17], [18].

5. CONCLUSION

Pregnancy is a time of many changes, and it is important for women to be aware of these changes in order to cross this time safely. The major results show that all of the primigravida women in the study had minor pregnancy discomforts to varied degrees, irrespective of gestational age. Among the sample subjects, morning sickness was the most common minor discomfort and insomnia was the least one common. Furthermore, a sizable portion of the sample subjects treated their discomforts at home with home care remedies.

- **Recommendation:** Based on the study conclusions, the following recommendations are presented: Prenatal health education should place a strong emphasis on educating expectant mothers about common discomforts, appropriate self-care techniques, and safe at-home remedies.

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Author Contributions Statement

Name of Author	C	M	So	Va	Fo	I	R	D	O	E	Vi	Su	P	Fu
Fadia Hussein Ali	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Haider Abd AL Ameer Twair AL Hamad	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓

C : **C**onceptualization
M : **M**ethodology
So : **So**ftware
Va : **Va**lidation
Fo : **Fo**rmal analysis
I : **I**nvestigation
R : **R**esources
D : **D**ata Curation
O : Writing - **O**riginal Draft
E : Writing - Review & **E**diting
Vi : **Vi**sualization
Su : **Su**pervision
P : **P**roject administration
Fu : **Fu**nding acquisition

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

Informed Consent

All participants were informed about the purpose of the study, and their voluntary consent was obtained prior to data collection.

Ethical Approval

Not Applicable.

Data Availability

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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BIOGRAPHIES OF AUTHORS

	**Fadia Hussein Ali,** is a Lecturer (PhD) i n Maternal and Neonatal Health Nursing at the College of Nursing, University of Al-Qadisiyah, Iraq. She has co-authored several nursing research works with her colleague Haider Abd AL Ameer Twair AL Hamad, and in particular, "Self-Care Practices in Primary Dysmenorrhea among Nursing Students at AL-Diwaniyah Governorate" (2024) plus another study about nursing students' COVID-19 knowledge, and what they do as precaution measures. Her interest areas sit around maternal–neonatal health, nursing education, and more generally, how students behave health wise. Email: fadia.ali@qu.edu.iq
	**Haider Abd AL Ameer Twair AL Hamad,** is Lecturer (PhD) in Adult Nursing at College of Nursing, University of Al-Qadisiyah Iraq. He has co-authored nursing research with colleague Fadia Hussein Ali, including studies that look at how nursing students do self-care for dysmenorrhea and what they know about COVID-19 precaution practices. He also carried out, on his own, work about medication adherence in renal failure patients at Al-Diwaniyah Teaching Hospital, with attention on socio demographic influences on treatment compliance, and it shows a clear focus there. Overall his research interest stay on adult nursing, managing long-term illnesses and also patient adherence related behavior, in a practical sense. Email: haider.alhamad@qu.edu.iq