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ABSTRACT

Newborn has various needs as frequent feeding, bathing, provision of warmth umbilical cord care, protection etc. Adequate care for them depends on the mother's awareness, attitude and skill. Thus, maternal competence is vital. This calls for a newborn care teaching program to increase maternal competence on newborn care. This study used quasi-experimental pretest-posttest design with non-equivalent control group to determine the effect of newborn care program on maternal competence and find associations between the maternal competence and selected demographic profiles among antenatal mothers. The study was conducted in the antenatal and postnatal units of General Hospital Owerri Imo State, Nigeria.

A purposive non-probability sampling technique was used. 80 pregnant mother attending antenatal clinic were recruited. Inclusion criteria were pregnant mothers at 37th week till delivery, who are available during the study, willing to participate, low risk pregnancy, at least 18 years old and competent to consent. The intervention was a newborn care program that was administered using audio-visual teaching. The experimental group (n=40) received the newborn care program. The comparison group (N=40) did not receive any. Outcomes were measured with the Parenting Sense of Competence scale at baseline and post intervention at 2 days after delivery.

Mothers who received newborn care program had significant improvement in the maternal competence from low (pretest) to high (posttest) in satisfaction ratings. There was a significant difference ($p = 0.0397$, $t = -2.453$) in the level of maternal competence satisfaction rating. Relationship was established ($P < 0.05$) between the level of maternal and age ($\chi^2 = 8.95$, $p = 0.014$) and parity ($\chi^2 = 6.85$, $p = 0.0325$) only but not with education, employment and family support. The newborn care program was effective in improving the maternal competence of antenatal mothers. Mother's age and parity were identified to influence maternal competence while education, employment and family support were not significantly related to maternal competence.

Keywords: newborn care, maternal competence, neonatal care programme