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Low back pain disability during pregnancy among mothers who attend the ante-natal clinic in a tertiary care hospital, Sri Lanka

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Background: Presence of Low Back Pain (LBP) in pregnancy has a great impact on quality of life and daily living activities among pregnant population. Thus, evaluating the disability level of LBP during each trimester is useful.

Objective: To assess the low back pain disability among primiparous mothers who attend the ante-natal clinic, Teaching Hospital, Peradeniya, Sri Lanka.

Methods & Materials: A descriptive cross sectional study was conducted in the ante-natal clinic from September to December 2019. Primiparous mothers who were in first (n₁=181), second (n₂=225) and third (n₃=178) trimesters were recruited (n=584) using simple random sampling. Self-administered Modified Oswestry Low Back Pain Disability Questionnaire (MOLBPDQ) which is composed of 10 questions was used for data collection after the standard questionnaire validation. LBP score and disability level were estimated using scoring criteria of MOLBPDQ. Pearson chi-square test and Pearson correlation test were adopted in data analysis using SPSS version 25.0. Continuous data presented as means and standard deviations. Categorical data presented as proportions and percentages. P<0.05 was considered significant.

Results: Mean age of participants was 25.88±3.18 years and their response rate was 96.4%. Only 1.7% mothers had no functional disability (LBP score 0%). No mother presented with crippled (LBP score 60<80%) or bed bound disability (LBP score 80<100%). From the total, 41.8% presented with minimal disability (LBP score 0<20%), 48.3% moderate disability (LBP score 20<40%) and 9.9% severe disability (LBP score 40<60%) irrespective of the trimester. Mean LBP disability scores of pregnant mothers are 22.18±12.22%, 23.88±12.13% and 26.54±12. Eighty-five percent (85%) were in the first, second and third trimesters respectively. A significantly higher LBP disability level was seen in mothers who had higher pre-pregnancy BMI in their second trimester by Chi-square test ($\chi^2=10.40$, p=0.03, df=4). Significant weak negative correlation was found between LBP score and sleeping duration by Pearson's correlation test (p=0.001, r= -0.162).

Conclusion: LBP disability among primiparous pregnant mothers is common ranging from minimal to severe level which requires attention. Further studies are recommended to evaluate LBP disability periodically to prescribe health intervention and improve quality of life of pregnant mothers.

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