

Exploring Factors Associated with Substance Use among Pregnant Women in a Cape Town Community

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Abstract : Substance use among pregnant women is a perennial problem in the Western Cape Province of South Africa. There are many influential factors associated with substance use among women of childbearing age. The study explored factors associated with substance use among pregnant women using a qualitative research design and the bio-ecological theoretical framework to explore and guide the researcher throughout the study. Participants were selected using purposive sampling. Only participants accessed from the Department of Social Development meeting the inclusion criteria of the study were interviewed using semi structured interviews. Immediate referral for psychological intervention during the interview was available for participants who needed it. Braun and Clarke's six phases of thematic analysis were utilised to analyse the data. The study adheres to ethical guidelines for the participants' protection. Participants were informed about the study before the initiation of the interviews and the details of their voluntary participation were explained. The key findings from this study illustrate that socio-cultural factors, personal factors, emotional response and intimate relationships are the major contributing factors to substance use among pregnant women in this sample. The results outline the preventative measures that pregnant women implement. Lastly, the study reveals the positive and negative perceptions of substance use programmes that participants share. Some of the study findings are similar to the existing literature and some of the findings differed. Recommendations emanating from the study include that the stakeholders, rehabilitation centres, Department of Health and future researchers should act proactively against substance use during pregnancy.

Keywords : substance addiction, antenatal care, pregnancy, substance use

Conference Title : ICAPBS 2020 : International Conference on Applied Psychology and Behavioral Sciences

Conference Location : Cape Town, South Africa

Conference Dates : November 05-06, 2020