

Barriers to Access among Indigenous Women Seeking Prenatal Care: A Literature Review

Authors : Zarish Jawad, Nikita Chugh, Karina Dadar

Abstract : Introduction: This paper aims to identify barriers indigenous women face in accessing prenatal care in Canada. It explores the differences in prenatal care received between indigenous and non-indigenous women. The objective is to look at changes or programs in Canada's healthcare system to reduce barriers to accessing safe prenatal care for indigenous women. Methods: A literature search of 12 papers was conducted using the following databases: PubMed, Medline, OVID, Google Scholar, and ScienceDirect. The studies included were written in English only, including indigenous females between the age of 19-35, and review articles were excluded. Participants in the studies examined did not have any severe underlying medical conditions for the duration of the study, and study designs included in the review are prospective cohort, cross-sectional, case report, and case-control studies. Results: Among all the barriers Indigenous women face in accessing prenatal care, the three most significant barriers Indigenous women face include a lack of culturally safe prenatal care, lack of services in the Indigenous community, proximity of prenatal facilities to Indigenous communities and costs of transportation. Discussion: The study found three significant barriers indigenous women face in accessing prenatal care in Canada; the geographical distribution of healthcare facilities, distrust between patients and healthcare professionals, and cultural sensitivity. Some of the suggested solutions include building more birthing and prenatal care facilities in rural areas for indigenous women, educating healthcare professionals on culturally sensitive healthcare, and involving indigenous people in the decision-making process to reduce distrust and power imbalances. Conclusion: The involvement of indigenous women and community leaders is important in making decisions regarding the implementation of effective healthcare and prenatal programs for indigenous women. However, further research is required to understand the effectiveness of the solutions and the barriers that make prenatal care less accessible for indigenous women in Canada.

Keywords : indigenous, maternal health, prenatal care, barriers

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