

Unveiling the Nexus: A Holistic Investigation on the Role of Cultural Beliefs and Family Dynamics in Shaping Maternal Health in Primigravida Women

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Abstract : In South Asian countries, Pakistan faces significant public health challenges regarding maternal and neonatal health (MNH). Despite global efforts to improve maternal, newborn, child, and health (MNCH) outcomes through initiatives like the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), high maternal and neonatal mortality rates persist. In patriarchal societies, cultural norms, family dynamics, and gender roles heavily influence healthcare accessibility and decision-making processes, often leading to delayed and inadequate maternal care. Addressing these socio-cultural barriers and enhancing healthcare resources is crucial to improving maternal health outcomes in areas like Faisalabad. A qualitative study was conducted involving two groups of informants: gynecologists practicing in private clinics and first-time pregnant women receiving care in government hospitals. Data collection included obtaining institutional permission, conducting semi-structured in-depth interviews, and using non-probability sampling techniques. A proactive strategy to overcome maternal health challenges involves using aversion therapy and disseminating knowledge among family members. This approach aims to foster a deep understanding within the family unit regarding the importance of maternal well-being, thereby creating a supportive environment and facilitating informed decision-making related to healthcare access and lifestyle choices. The findings indicate that maternal health is compromised both physiologically and psychologically, with significant implications for the baby's health. Mental well-being, in particular, is profoundly affected, largely due to familial behavior and entrenched cultural taboos.

Keywords : maternal health, neonatal health, socio-cultural norms, primigravida women, gynecologist, familial conduct, cultural taboos.

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