

# **ABSTRACT**

## **Problems Experienced by the Mother and Baby in the Postnatal Period**

**Claudette Lewis  
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A cross sectional study was conducted in St. Thomas, Jamaica, among postnatal mothers and babies to identify problems experienced during this crucial period. One Hundred and Twenty Seven mothers were interviewed 3 - 6 weeks after delivery.

The mothers' ages ranged from 14 - 39 years; 94.0% had normal delivery and 96.0% of births took place in the hospital. The mean length of stay in the hospital was 1.56 days.

Sixty five (52.0%) of babies had one or more complaints. The two most frequent complaints were jaundice and infected eyes. Nine of the babies with complaints were admitted to hospital. There were 75 (59.0%) mothers with complaints. The mothers most frequently complained of engorged breasts and backache, but 18.0% of the mothers had complaints including heavy bleeding, offensive vaginal loss (lochia), pain on urination and fever.

The most frequently occurring antenatal problems were anaemia 18.9%, oedema 18.1%, vaginal discharge 17.3% and high blood pressure 15.7%.

The results showed that there was an association between mothers with antenatal problems developing postnatal problems. Seventy four percent of mothers who had antenatal problems also had postnatal problems.

On discharge from hospital, mothers were given advice mainly on care of the baby but not on self care.

Approximately half (49.6%) of the mothers were visited at home postnatally and 76.2% of these visits were done by the Community Health Aide.