

ABSTRACT

Changing Patterns In The Clinic Population And Utilization Of The Antenatal Unit At The University Hospital Of The West Indies Between 1980 and 1992

Mervin N. Palmer-Levy

A 13 year retrospective study was done on 792 records of attenders at the UHWI antenatal clinic, to determine changes in the population and the utilization of the clinic between 1980 and 1992. The study was conducted during the months of December 1993 and April 1994. Data was transcribed from the registration book at the clinic and the docketts of patients, to a data collection schedule. An analysis was done on the socio-demographic data, medical and obstetric history, these were cross tabulated with the number of visits to determine utilization.

Findings analysed from the data collected revealed that there was an overall decrease in the number of attenders. An increase was seen in the 30-39 years age group, with a 49.1% decrease in those less than 20 years of age despite an increase in teenage pregnancy. The relationship between age and the number of visits was significant ($p < .01$).

Attenders with a Primary/All age level of education were the modal group until 1988. when they were displaced by those with a Secondary/Vocational/commercial level of education. The relationship between education and number of visits was significant where ($p < 0.5$).

The study also revealed an increase in attenders of the skilled and professional groups with a decrease in the unemployed and a 50 % decrease in the student population, and there was no significant association between occupation and the number of visits. Of the total attenders 49.7% had previous obstetric complications. Hypertension was the modal group of those with medical complications, and an increase was seen in attenders with anaemia, heart disease and diabetes. Eighty percent of the attenders were from the catchment area with an increase from St Catherine which was outside the catchment area.

With these findings it is suggested that the area of patient health education should be reviewed to accommodate this shift toward older mothers with their attendant problems and needs.