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Improvements in antenatal care at IMSS are urgent to enhance women's experiences during ANC and encourage greater ANC use

Abstract:

Objective: The study aimed to (1) report on women's participation in the Mexican maternal cohort, (2) describe the utilization of antenatal care (ANC) and emergency services by pregnant women, and (3) analyze factors associated with these services.

Methods: An observational cohort study was conducted via telephone interviews with 1,390 pregnant women aged 18 to 49 at the Mexican Institute of Social Security (IMSS) after their first ANC contact. We assessed the number of ANC contacts, emergency room visits, quality of ANC perceived by women and the competence of ANC providers based on twelve key activities including blood pressure and weight measurement, blood and urine tests, ultrasound examination and counseling on nutrition, pregnancy warning signs, birth preparedness, newborn care, psychological counseling, and folic acid and iron supplementation. Factors influencing ANC and emergency service utilization were analyzed using multivariable negative binomial regression models.

Results: 3.7% of IMSS cohort participants dropped out due to miscarriage; 12.4% left after the baseline survey, and 11.8% during follow-ups. One-third of women who left the IMSS cohort rated their first ANC visit quality as poor or fair, while 30% of those who continued in the cohort reported poor or fair ANC quality at least once. Women in the cohort averaged six ANC visits, with 64.8% receiving at least 80% of the key ANC activities. Almost thirty percent sought emergency services. Increased ANC attendance was linked to health issues like hypertension, urinary infection and anemia, early ANC initiation, consultations with gynecologists and hospital ANC follow-ups. The use of emergency services was associated with chronic diseases and pregnancy complications.

Conclusion: Improvements in antenatal care at IMSS are urgent to enhance women's experiences during ANC and encourage greater ANC use.