



Applicant Information

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Abstract Details

Title:

“Witches and wizards can also suck your blood and they will tell you that you are anemic when you visit the health facility.” An ethnographic study of women’s perception on causes, prevention and treatment of anemia in two regions of Ghana and its impact on their health seeking behaviours.

Category:

Maternal and child health

Authors:

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Objectives:

This study sought to explore socio- cultural beliefs surroundings causes, prevention and treatment of anemia and their impacts on pregnant women’s health seeking behaviours.

Method:

Eight focus group discussions were conducted with pregnant women and women who had given birth in the last 6 months. Thirty-four indepth interviews were held with a cross section of community members in five districts. Audio recorded interviews were transcribed, uploaded onto NVivo Version 11 for triangulation, coding and the data was analyzed thematically.

Results:

Most women mothers reported that anemia has both biomedical and spiritual causes. Biomedical causes mentioned were poor nutrition, lack of sleep, excessive consumption of salt, not taking pregnancy drugs, and unclean surroundings. Spiritually, they believed that witches and wizards can suck pregnant women’s blood. Prevention strategies cited were: eating leafy vegetables, consuming more protein, taking drugs they are given at ANC. They also stated that treatment for anemia involved taking drugs given at ANC, taking turkey berries and cocoyam leaves. Treatment for spiritually induced anemia involved going to prayer centers or to the fetish priest. They stated that they are first diagnosed at the hospital, before they visit the herbalist for treatment

Conclusion:

Though women had some knowledge on biomedical causes, prevention and treatment of anemia, there were a lot of misconceptions as well as gaps between knowledge and practice; and these need to be addressed. Interventions targeted towards eradicating anemia should be tailored towards the beliefs of the communities and be focused on addressing the misconceptions.

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