



Standardizing The Content Of Postnatal Care During The Covid Pandemic : A Study In Tertiary Hospital

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Background:

- Postnatal period is crucial time in the life of a women.
- A single postnatal visit at 6 weeks is a vital time to assess for various co-morbidities and plan reproductive choices.
- Pregnant and postpartum women faced unique challenges during **COVID-19 pandemic** that may put them at elevated risk of mental health problems.
- There is a need to explicitly address the impact of COVID-19 related stressors on mental health in perinatal women, as prevention of viral exposure itself does not mitigate the pandemic's mental health impact.

Aims and Objective:

- To effectively standardize and establish the content of postnatal care for women presenting to the postnatal clinic at or after 6 weeks.
- To calculate incidence of postpartum anemia
- To strengthen postpartum contraception

Materials and Methods:

INCLUSION CRITERIA

- All postnatal women who visited the PNC clinic anytime between 6 weeks to 12 weeks.

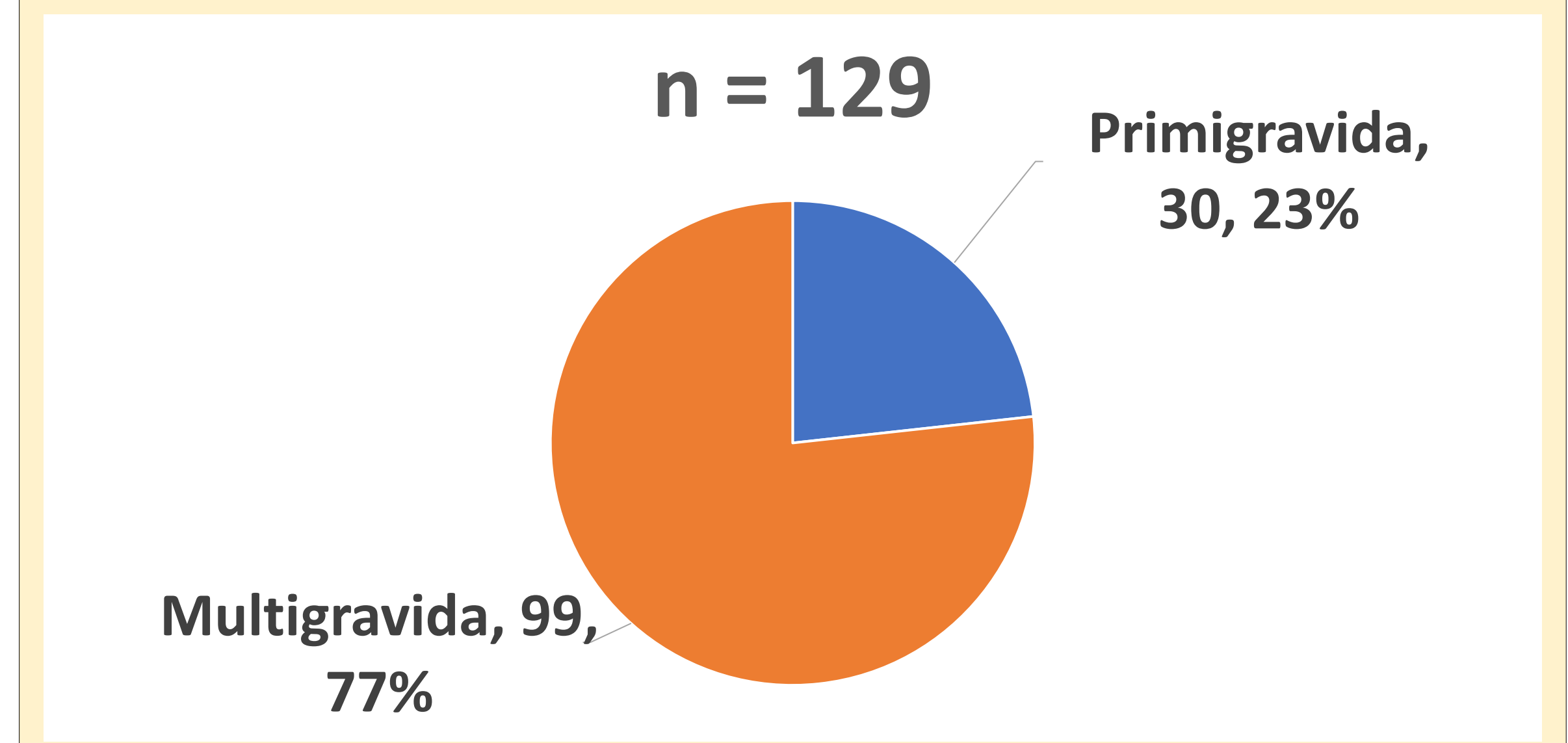
EXCLUSION CRITERIA

- Postnatal women who visited the post natal clinic before 6 weeks

Materials and Methods:

- Postnatal clinic was briefly discontinued during Covid pandemic and restarted after September 2021.
- Standardized proforma was designed incorporating important aspects of postnatal care.
- This included aspects from history, examination, and important investigations.
- Apart from general advice, condition specific advice was given based on specific co-morbidities.
- Patients attending postnatal clinic between September 2021 to January 2022 were included.

Results:



Results:

- 55 women had diabetes, hypertension, heart disease or intrahepatic cholestasis of pregnancy (42.6%) during their pregnancy.

Results:

- Hypertension**
 - Of the women with gestational hypertension (n=10), high blood pressure persisted in two.
 - They were **advised for BP monitoring and follow-up in medicine clinic.**
- Anaemia**
 - Hemoglobin was done for all; postpartum anemia was diagnosed in 50 % of patients.
 - 10 % of which had moderate anaemia.
 - Oral haematinics were advised for all.
- Endocrinological disorders**
 - Those with history of deranged blood sugars or thyroid profile were advised fasting and post prandial blood sugars and referred to endocrinologist where indicated.**
- Contraception**
 - 70 patients (54.3%) had chosen some method of contraception at the time of discharge while **17 were advised contraception at the 6-week postnatal visit (13.2%).**
- Mental Score Assessment**
 - A mental score assessment was done by using Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Score.
 - When this scale was administered, **2 patients were found to have clinical depressive symptoms**, who were then counseled and referred for advice from psychologists.

Discussion:

A postnatal visit encompassing general and specific check-up of the mother and neonate is especially paramount

- Support the development of infant feeding skills and strengthen the mother's knowledge
- To ensure follow-up for medical comorbidities and counsel for contraception, as acceptance rate is higher at this time, as reported in various studies .
- To identify danger signs and prevent maternal and/or neonatal loss.
- To discourage any practice detrimental to health of mother/infant
- In a recent systematic analysis, Morrell et al. stressed significance of postnatal care to prevent and treat postpartum depression

Conclusions:

- Postnatal clinic is the need of the hour as:**
 - It provides touch point with Health facility for the woman after pregnancy
 - Reproductive choices can be explored, and appropriate contraceptive advice provided.
 - It is a vital time to screen for and treat anemia.
 - It provides opportunity for screening for Non communicable diseases
 - It is a period of immense emotional changes and hence an assessment for emotional health is an important component.