

“Women's Perception on the Quality of Maternity Care Services in Public Hospitals of Western region of The Gambia during COVID 19 Pandemic”.

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Introduction: Maternal and child health indicators in The Gambia are unacceptably high, despite interventions to promote quality maternity services. A study conducted in the country have shown that about 66% of all maternal deaths in hospitals are due to direct causes and 75% of these are avoidable (Sambou, 2012).

Methodology: A qualitative method was used to assess women's perception of the quality of maternity care in western region. **Sample Size:** Forty four (44) participant took part in the study. Thirty (30) were studied in the in-depth interview(15 from each hospital) and 14 in the focused group discussion. **Inclusion Criteria;** Attended ANC, delivered at the health facility and is attending postpartum care at the same facility, were selected as participants. Those who had still births and underwent cesarean section were also recruited as participants. **Exclusion Criteria;** Had eclampsia during the intrapartum period was excluded. Those who did not attend ANC or delivered at the health facility but are attending postpartum care where excluded.

Results: Our study showed poor perception of women on the quality of maternity care services in public sector. Women had poor perception about the waiting and examination rooms; cleanliness of the toilet facilities; availability of hand washing stations; mixed feelings about the attitude of health care providers and about the time spent to acquire antenatal cards. Most of the study participants reported not being given adequate information on danger signs during pregnancy, labour and the postpartum period. However, women had good perception about privacy during vaginal examination and labour management.

Conclusion: Overall, most women were not satisfied with the quality of maternity care services in the public sector of western region of the Gambia.

