ASSESSING PREVALENCE AND RISK FACTORS OF HEPATITIS B SURFACE ANTIGEN AMONGST PREGNANT WOMEN ATTENDING ANTENATAL CLINIC IN THE NORTHWEST REGION OF CAMEROON

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ABSTRACT

Hepatitis B infection in pregnant women is on the rise with children having greater risk of acquiring HBV. This study seeks to assess the prevalence and risk factors among pregnant women in Cameroon. This study was conducted from May-July 2014. A questionnaire that constituted information on socio-demographic characteristics, obstetric characteristics and possible risk factors were administered to pregnant women who gave their consent. Blood samples were obtained and tested for the presence of hepatitis B surface antigen (HBsAg) using a rapid immunoassay kit**.** Data was analyzed using SPSS version 16.0. The percentages were calculated and compared between the sero-positive and sero-negative groups using and chi-square test. A total of 260 pregnant women were recruited. In all 20(7.7%) were positive for HBsAg. The prevalence of HBsAg was not statistically different between the different age groups but was significant (p = 0.012) among pregnant women from rural town 3(2.8%) to urban town 17(11.2%). Of the 246(94.6%) subjects accepted to vaccinate their baby against HBV only 30 (11.5%) were willing to pay for the hepatitis B immunoglobulin G vaccine despite the low cost. Only women who had attain tertiary education and with a high monthly income were willing to pay for the vaccine. Level of education, marital status, multiple sexual partners, scarification or tattooing, blood transfusion and history of surgery were found to be risk factors associated with transmission. This study indicates a high prevalence of HBsAg and requires that all pregnant woman must be screened and their children be administer free of charge hepatitis B immunoglobulin G vaccine.

Keywords: Hepatitis B surface antigen, prevalence, risk factors and pregnant women.