

A Review on High Burden of Malaria during Pregnancy: Need of Social Science Intervention

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ABSTRACT Pregnant women and infants are more susceptible to malaria, and the malaria during pregnancy has deleterious effects on both the mother and the pregnancy outcome. In many malaria endemic countries, the preventive intermittent treatment (PIT) with sulphadoxine-pyrimithamine or chloroquine has been instituted. In India PIT with chloroquine has been instituted. Studies suggested that PIT prevent malaria during pregnancy and reduces the severe maternal anaemia, low birth weight babies and infant mortality substantially. Despite of availability of efficacious PIT with chloroquine, the treatment compliance rate is not satisfactory among several endemic communities including India. Hence, community's perceptions and utilization pattern of malaria chemoprophylaxis should be assessed properly and there is an urgent need of research towards the development of efficacious, cost effective and sustainable malaria control tools for protecting pregnant women. A strong social research component to study people's perceptions and knowledge towards understanding the lower utilization of PIT has to be incorporated in the PIT of the national programme. This research further helps the programme in developing 'culture-sensitive' community mobilization and communication strategies.